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ABSTRACT

This guide helps secondary students to understand "The Diary of Anne Frank" through a series of short essays, maps, and photographs. In view of new scholarship, the historical context in which Anne Frank wrote may be studied to improve the student's perspective of recent history and of the present. A drawing shows the hiding place in the home where the Frank family lived. The essays include: (1) "The Need for Broader Perspective in Understanding Anne Frank's Diary" (Joel S. Fishman); (2) "The Uniqueness of the Holocaust" (Alex Grobman); (3) "Anne Frank's World" (Elma Verhey); (4) "Anne Frank and the Dutch Myth" (Elma Verhey); (5) "A New Perspective on Helpers of Jews During the Holocaust: The Case of Miep and Jan Gies" (Dienke Hondius); (6) "Teaching the Holocaust through the Diary of Anne Frank" (Judith Tydor Baumel); (7) "Examining Optimism: Anne Frank's Place in Postwar Culture" (Alex Sagan); (8) "Dutch Jewry: An Historical Overview"; and (9) "Chronology of the Frank Family and the Families in the Secret Annex." A selected bibliography accompanies the text. (EH)

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ANNE FRANK IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A TEACHING GUIDE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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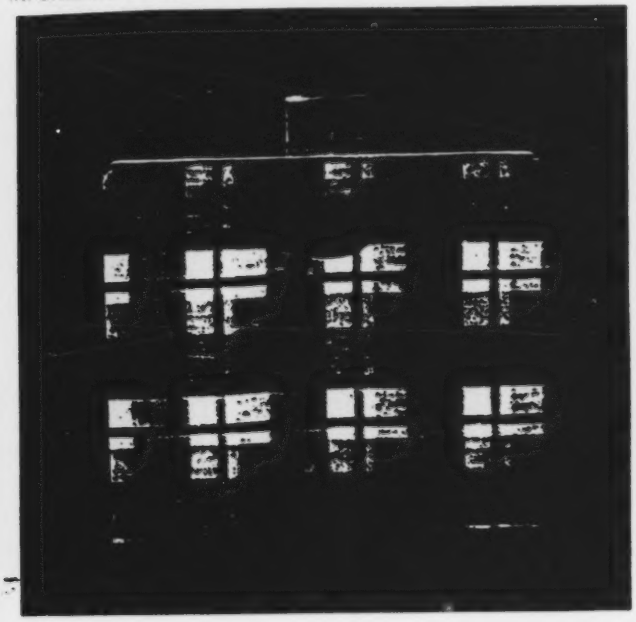

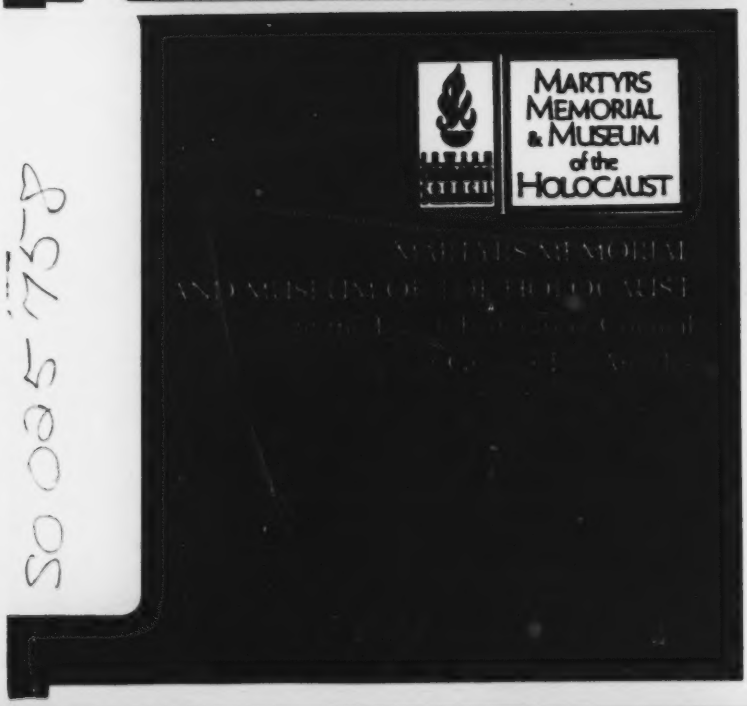

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Anne Frank.

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A TEACHING GUIDE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

MARTYRS MEMORIAL
AND MUSEUM OF THE HOLOCAUST
of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles

in cooperation with

ORE-IDA FOODS, INC.

by Alex Grobman, Ph.D.
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The Need For Broader Perspective In Understanding Anne Frank's Diary

by Joel S. Fishman, Ph.D.,
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In September 1950 a group of leading European historians convened in Amsterdam to discuss some of the problems of writing the history of the Second World War.[1] At this gathering one of the major speakers was the distinguished British historian Arnold J. Toynbee. Toynbee observed that the great historians writing in Greek—namely Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Josephus, and Procopius—wrote about their own times. Discussing the dynamics of writing about the recent past, Toynbee pointed to the impact and lasting effect left by the first generation of historians.

> . . . it is rather difficult for later generations to escape the first impression [given] to some [historical] period . . . by contemporary historians . . . It is very difficult to be sufficiently on our guard against the patterns [created] for us by our predecessors.[2]

Toynbee was referring primarily to works of academic scholarship. He did not know, and could not know, that a young Jewish girl, hiding in Amsterdam and in fear for her life, had written a diary which would shape the view of millions as to the meaning of the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the history of the Netherlands under German occupation.[3] Yet Toynbee was basically correct. Today we must come to terms with Anne Frank's account—the best known primary source of its generation—along with her legend which has assumed a life of its own.

The contemporary Dutch journalist Elma Verhey writes [*Anne Frank and the Dutch Myth*] in this volume that Anne Frank's view of the world was limited by the confines of the world in which she lived: "On Monday morning, July 6th, 1942, the door of Prinsengracht 463 was closed," and with this "her view of the outside world".[4]

Anne wrote faithfully and movingly about her first-hand experiences in hiding; about her relationships with her family and those with whom she shared her life in hiding; and particularly about her own personal development. Although her experience during wartime was limited, so, too, for that matter, were the first-hand accounts of many contemporary adults who endured the

hardships of war in other corners of occupied Europe.

What makes *The Diary of Anne Frank* special from a historical point of view is that—for at least two generations—it helped form the views of millions of readers, movie audiences and theater goers. The *Diary* has become one of the main sources for propagating the optimistic and positive image of the Netherlands as a country which had "done the right thing"—rising en masse against the German oppressor and hiding their fellow Jewish citizens at risk to their lives. .

In Holland, if Anne Frank's teenage view of the outside world was primarily limited to cramped quarters, the reality which she could not have known was far more complicated[5] Some scholars are now coming to recognize contradictions in the historical record in Holland. Yet for reasons of expedience, at best, these contradictions have rarely, if ever, been publicly challenged by those with the responsibility to do so.

Anne Frank was a sincere and honest chronicler of her personal experiences, and her *Diary* is a remarkable document recognized by many as one of the great first-person accounts of all time. She was a remarkable young woman. On the other hand, some regard it as unfair, or a dubious undertaking, to misuse *The Diary of Anne Frank* to convey the type of information which should be found in a general history of the Netherlands under the German occupation, or to substitute the Anne Frank text for a history of the destruction of Dutch Jewry.

To appreciate the diary we must place it in its historical context. We must understand the political conditions in the prewar Netherlands . . . we must understand the local Jewish community which generally felt secure in Holland . . . we must consider the matters of resistance and collaboration . . . and the Jewish community's postwar struggle to reestablish itself.

Since we now have the benefit of new scholarship to help us grasp the historical context in which Anne Frank wrote, we must make the effort to use it—to improve our perspective of recent history and of the present.

ENDNOTES

[1] *World War II in the West*, The Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation, Amsterdam, September 5-9, 1950.

[2] Arnold J. Toynbee, *Contemporary History as a Scientific Problem*. General Session, September 5th, 1950. *ibid.*, p.3.

[3] David Barnouw and Gerold van der Stroom, *The Diary of Anne Frank, The Critical Edition* (trs. Arnold J. Pomerans and B. M. Mooyaart-Doubleday) New York: Doubleday, 1986.

[4] Elma Verhey, *Anne Frank and the Dutch myth*, in this volume.

[5] See particularly G. Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation*. (tr. Louise Willmot) New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.

The Uniqueness Of The Holocaust

by **Alex Grobman, Ph.D.,**
Director, Martyrs Memorial and Museum of the Holocaust*

In ever larger numbers, states throughout the country are mandating that the history of the Holocaust be taught in public schools. At the same time, an increasing number of parochial and private schools are also teaching the subject. An important reason for this emphasis in the schools, in addition to the enormity of the event itself, is the historical uniqueness of the Holocaust.

A key objective of this essay is to overcome a tendency to equate the Holocaust with other modern tragedies. This is not to disparage the horror and tragedy or the scope of other nightmarish events—some persisting today because of the failure to learn from the lessons of the Holocaust—but to clarify distinctions. By equating the destruction of the Jews of Europe with other events—such as the bombing of Hiroshima, the treatment of Native Americans by the United States government, the institution of slavery in America, the deportation and incarceration of Japanese Americans in American concentration camps during the Second World War, the Armenian tragedy of 1915-1917, and the mass murders in Cambodia, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere—we view everything on the same level as the Holocaust. However, to do so is historically misleading, for it distorts the historical reality of both the Shoah (Hebrew term for Holocaust) and these other crimes, and in the end, trivializes the importance of this unprecedented and unparalleled event in modern history, and minimizes the experiences of all those who suffered.

In August 1945, when the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, 130,000 people were either killed, injured, or could not be found. About 75,000 suffered the same fate when the Americans dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki. But the United States never intended to destroy the Japanese people. They wanted to demonstrate America's superior military strength which they hoped would persuade the Japanese to surrender so the killing would end. [1] As soon as the Japanese surrendered, the Americans ceased their attack. With the Nazis, the mass

destruction began *after* the victims had surrendered.[2]

From the eighteenth to the twentieth century, the United States pursued an exploitative, self-serving, and heartless policy toward the American Indians. These policies wreaked havoc with their traditional way of life. Nevertheless, the American government never expressed, advocated, or initiated any official decree to destroy all the Indians. The Indian population declined significantly between 1781 and 1900, but these deaths resulted primarily from pandemic disease first brought to the New World by the Europeans and carried westward by waves of migration and by missionaries. Though this decline was undoubtedly assisted by organized and spontaneous acts of aggression, the American government never adopted a policy of genocide. Indeed, the official government policy—the removal of the Indian population and later placing of them on reservations—was intended to maintain the Indian peoples from extinction, no matter how wretched and brutal the conditions under which they were then forced to live.[3]

White Americans imported African slaves to the United States so they would have cheap labor with which to exploit the vast natural resources of America and to farm sugar, cotton, and other cash crops. The slaves were not treated humanely, but their owners had a vested economic and utilitarian interest in keeping them alive to work and procreate. Killing them would have defeated the very purpose for which they were brought to the United States. That the American government acquiesced in the exploitation of human beings in this manner is a blight on the nation, but the government did fight a war against its own citizens to free them.[4]

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 9066 on February 19, 1942, he set in motion a process resulting in the deportation and incarceration of almost 120,000 persons of Japanese descent, two thirds of whom were American citizens. Included were men, women, and children who were sent to concentration camps and U.S. Justice Department Internment Camps located in California, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, and Arkansas. Some were imprisoned for up to three and a half years. They sustained enormous financial losses, from which few ever recovered. The psychological trauma will remain with them for the rest of their lives and probably will be felt for generations to come by Americans of Japanese descent. The insidious and unprecedented use of race, of collective guilt, by the United States government against its own citizens should serve as a warning. Nevertheless, though it incarcerated the Japanese on the grounds of national security, the American government never officially planned to murder these people individually or as a group nor to use them for slave labor, for medical experiments, or even as scapegoats for the ills of society at home.[5]

On August 22, 1939, several days before Hitler launched his attack on Poland, he implored his military leaders to show no mercy toward those who stood in his way. "I have placed my deathhead formations in readiness . . . with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain

the living space [*Lebensraum*] that we need. Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"[6]

Between 1915 and 1917, the Turkish government conducted a brutal campaign to deport Armenians from Turkey, which resulted in the slaughter of from 550,000 to 800,000 out of a population of 1.5 to 1.7 million. This translates into a loss of from 32 to 53.2 percent.[7] However, although Hitler took comfort from the failure of the West to remember the massacre of the Armenians, this does not mean that the Holocaust and the Armenian tragedy are similar historical events. The Turks were driven by "extreme nationalism and religious fanaticism." They wanted to establish a "new order" in Turkey, and the Armenian population was in the way. This was a situation of competing nationalisms—a collision between Armenians and Turks, between Christians and Muslims. To achieve this new national order, the Turks had to remove the Armenians and did great violence to the Armenian people in the process.

But the Turks did not view the Armenians as a satanic or biological threat to themselves or the world. Although they referred to Armenians as a race, the Turks accepted those who converted to Islam and did not harm them. Moreover, Armenians were not killed everywhere, particularly not in the Turkish capitol of Istanbul, where thousands sought refuge and survived the war. Once the Armenian nationalist threat had been thwarted, the Turks no longer felt a need to kill them.[8]

During the Marxist regime of Pol Pot in Cambodia/Kampuchea, 2.5 million people out of about 7.3 million were forced to resettle under the most brutal conditions. Singled out for special treatment were the military and the cultural, religious, and intellectual elites of the country. However, none of these groups were marked out for complete annihilation. Other examples of large-scale migrations and the destruction of culture include the tribal conflict that led to the persecution and removal of the Asian community in Uganda by Idi Amin; the attack against the intellectuals and Buddhist monks in Tibet by the Chinese; and the oppression and exile of the Chinese minorities to different areas of Asia. In all these Asian cases mentioned, there had been an attempt to create a pure communist state; and in all these instances the governments in power allowed for conversion to the new reigning ideology. No groups were marked for complete destruction.[9]

All historical events are not of the same magnitude. But this is not a contest to see which group suffered the most or sustained the greatest numerical losses. Distinguishing between different historical events does not, and should not, lessen or demean the suffering of others. Out of the 15-17 million Jews alive in the world in 1939, six million or about 40 percent, were annihilated. Counting only the Jews of Europe, the percentage is about 65 percent. In Lithuania, Poland, and Holland the percentages were 95-96, 92, and 80 respectively. When we contrast this with other tragedies such as the estimated 20 million Soviet citizens between 1929 and 1939 who died in Stalinist Russia, and the 34 to 62 million killed during the Chinese civil war of the 1930s and 1940s when Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Tse-tung fought for control of China, we see that the rate of

death surpasses the Holocaust by a factor of at least 3. But these people died under far different circumstances which are not comparable to those of the Holocaust.[10]

When Joseph Stalin killed millions of his fellow citizens, he did not murder all of the individuals of any one group. Among his many targets were individual academics, aristocrats, party and military officials, peasants, Ukrainians, and Jews who resisted his efforts to modernize and revolutionize the Soviet Union. His assault on the kulaks was intended primarily to force them onto collective farms as part of the collectivization of agriculture rather than to kill them. Stalin wanted to industrialize the country in the shortest period of time and to force collectivization upon the peasants. If this meant that millions of people would die in the process, that was the price the nation had to pay. In the Chinese civil war, the numbers include military and civilian casualties, but there was no genocidal intent.[11]

If we are to learn from history, we must be concerned about objective truth, with transmitting what actually transpired and not allowing those with their own particular agenda to obscure our understanding of what occurred. Every atrocity, every injustice in contemporary society does not have to be a Holocaust for it to be worthy of our deep concern and response.

The Holocaust has become the event by which we measure all other atrocities. Why? Because for the first time in history we have an entire group—the Jews—where every man, woman, and child was intentionally singled out by a state for total destruction. This has never happened before either to Jews or to any other group. Previously, Jews could convert to Christianity, flee for their lives, or remain in their cities and towns, hoping to prevail by using survival techniques that had sustained them throughout much of Jewish history.[12] Once the Nazi regime decided to annihilate the Jewish people, these were no longer alternatives.

When we refer to the Holocaust, we mean the systematic bureaucratically administered destruction by the Nazis and their collaborators of six million Jews during the Second World War—people found "guilty" only because they were viewed inaccurately as a race. The Nazi state orchestrated the attempted mass murder of every person with at least three Jewish grandparents.[13]

Every primary social, religious, and political institution in Germany was involved in the process of destruction. This included the bureaucrats who were all too often more concerned with their own careers than with the plight of those they were sending off to be killed. Others involved in this system were the lawyers who enacted legislation depriving German Jews of their civil and property rights; the judges who ensured that these laws were binding; the military and the police who enforced these and other regulations and orders against the Jews; the railroad workers who transported the Jews to their death; the intellectuals, teachers, and scientists who gave legitimacy to the pseudoscientific theories serving as the foundation of Nazi ideology and practice; the students who rarely challenged their teachers and professors; the architects and engineers who de-

signed and built the extermination camps; the physicians who were involved in the euthanasia program and later conducted medical experiments on human beings; the physicians who failed to speak out against these inhuman practices; the business community which supported Hitler once they recognized the huge profits that Jewish slave labor could provide; and the churches that were generally passive, or, if they protested, did so on behalf of Jews who had converted to Christianity—but rarely protested on behalf of the Jews in general—and did not see their speaking out as a moral imperative regardless of what the consequences might be.

The Nazis also annihilated a minimum of 300,000 Gypsies and many thousands of others: the physically and mentally disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, socialists, communists, trade unionists, and political and religious dissidents.

None of these groups, however, were the primary target of the Nazis—not the mentally disabled, who were killed in the euthanasia centers in Germany (here it is to be noted that the Nazis did not export this program to the civilian populations outside the Reich); not the homosexuals, who were regarded as social deviants but for whom the Nazis did not have a consistent policy (homosexuals were persecuted only in the Reich and in areas annexed to it but not in countries the Germans occupied); not the Gypsies, who were partly seen as "asocial" aliens and Aryans within society and therefore did not have to be annihilated completely; and not the Jehovah's Witnesses, who had refused to swear allegiance to Hitler and who declined to serve in the German army, but who were not marked for extinction; in fact, only a small number were incarcerated in the camps, and most of them were German nationals. The Nazis also did not single out every socialist, communist, trade unionist, or dissident—just those they perceived as a threat to the Reich. The Jews alone were the primary target of the Nazis.[14]

Why the Jews? To the Nazis, they were a satanic force that supposedly ruled the world through their control of Wall Street and the communist regime in the Soviet Union. A sophisticated individual would probably have recognized the inconsistency of this logic as well as the false assertion that Jews are a separate race. Yet, however simplistic, for the common German, and later for the rest of Europe, this absurd claim served as a useful rationalization. Sadly, there are people throughout the world who still subscribe to this and like myths.

Believing in all sorts of pseudoscientific and racial nonsense, the Nazis saw the Jews as a cancer, a dangerous virus, a bacillus that, if left unchecked, would allow the Jews to dominate the world completely.[15] In 1942, Hitler told Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, that "The discovery of the Jewish virus is one of the greatest revolutions that has taken place in the world; the battle in which we are engaged today is one of the same sort as the battle waged, during the last century, by [Louis] Pasteur and [Robert] Koch. How many diseases have their origin in the Jewish virus! . . . We shall regain our health only by eliminating the Jew. Everything has a cause; nothing comes by chance."[16]

Hitler believed that the Jews, through miscegenation, were race polluters whose aim was to obliterate the white race: "With every means he tries to destroy the racial foundations of the people he has set out to subjugate. Just as he himself systematically ruins women and girls, he does not shrink back from pulling down the blood barriers of others, even on a large scale. It was and it is the Jews who bring the Negroes into the Rhineland, always with the same secret thought and clear aim of ruining the hated white race by the necessarily resulting bastardization, throwing it down from its cultural and political height, and himself rising to be its master." [17]

Failure to confront the Jew would spell disaster for the human race, Hitler thought, as the following excerpt from *Mein Kampf* shows: "If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men . . . . by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting the work of the Lord."[18] In other words, as Steven Katz has noted, the "Holocaust was intended as, and received its enormous power from, the fact that it aimed at restructuring the cosmos anew—now without 'the Jews.'"[19] Those who understood national socialism as "nothing more than a political movement," Hitler rightly observed, "know scarcely anything of it. It is more than a religion: it is the will to create mankind anew."[20]

This abiding obsession with destroying the Jewish people can also be seen in Hitler's Political Testament. In his last communication with the German people, written on April 29, 1945, at 4 a.m. just before he and his mistress Eva Braun committed suicide, Hitler declared that "Above all I charge the leadership of the nation and their followers with the strict observance of the racial laws and with merciless resistance against the universal poisoners of all peoples, international Jewry." [21]

"It is," as Katz has argued, "this unconstrained, ideologically driven imperative that *every* Jew be murdered that distinguishes" [the Holocaust] "from prior and to date subsequent, however inhumane, acts of collective violence, ethnocide, and mass murder."[22] No longer did the Jews have the option to convert to Christianity and escape being killed. As long as the Nazis viewed them a separate race, the Jews were destined for extinction. Nothing the Jews could do would change that.

When the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, they did so not only for political and strategic reasons but also for the eradication of their mortal enemy—the Jews.[23] They pursued this ideological war even when it meant diverting resources from their troops at the front. When the need for trains to transport soldiers and supplies conflicted with the requirement to transport Jews to the extermination camps, both received equal consideration. In June 1942, the Germans were preparing a new summer offensive in southern Russia, to which they were committing all of their 266 reserve divisions on the Eastern front. In preparation for the attack, a two-week ban on civilian traffic had been declared. After Wilhelm Kruger, Himmler's top agent in Poland, objected to the head of the railroad authority about this arrangement, they reached an agreement whereby some civilian transports would be permitted during this period. Himmler felt this was inadequate,

so he intervened, leaving no doubt that regardless of the military needs the "Jewish problem" was still of the highest priority. As a result, from July 22 a train containing 5,000 Jews left Warsaw for Treblinka each day. In addition, twice a week a train containing 5,000 Jews from Przemysl left for Belzec.[24]

During the following winter, the position of the German military began to deteriorate. The German troops who were besieging Stalingrad had been surrounded by the Red Army. To break through the Russian lines, the Germans sent in a fresh Panzer division in mid-December. At the same time, the Germans imposed a one-month ban on civilian railroad transport beginning on December 15, 1942. Even after the ban ended, the disaster at Stalingrad required extensive rail transport. But Himmler again intervened, this time on January 20, 1943, to ensure that trains were available for moving Jews to the extermination camps.

From February 1943, trains were used to deport Jews from Berlin to Auschwitz and from the Bialystock ghetto to Treblinka. By March, Jews from all over Europe were being transported to their death. In July 1944, when the Germans were evacuating Greece and needed all available rail transport, the deportation of the Jews remained on schedule.[25]

What the Nazis had planned for the other nations that came under their control is not clear, in part because the Nazi leadership held differing attitudes towards them. What we do know is that the Jews alone were marked for total annihilation. Those Gypsies who were considered racially pure—that is, Aryans—were for the most part spared in Germany even if they were "asocials"; those who were viewed as racially impure criminals were not. Gypsies were condemned to a "selective mass murder on a vast scale."[26]

The Slavic peoples were viewed as subhumans but were still regarded on a higher level than the Jews. Members of the Polish intelligentsia and the Polish Catholic priests in western Poland were selected for eradication because, as leaders, they posed a potential threat to German political domination. The rest of the Slavic community was to be subjugated and kept as a permanent underclass as slaves. Their cultural, religious, and educational institutions were to be destroyed; even so, they would be kept alive to help build the new Reich. Since the western nations were viewed as Aryans, only those of mixed blood were considered for extermination.[27]

The Jews, during World War II, were the first victims of an all-out attempt at the physical annihilation of a people, but there is no guarantee that such an effort will not be repeated against some other group. ". . . The mere fact that every modern government possesses such power cannot but alter the relations between those who govern and those who are governed. This power must also alter the texture of foreign relations."[28]

In a very real sense, "Auschwitz has enlarged our conception of the state's capacity to do

violence. A barrier has been overcome in what for millennia had been regarded as the permissible limits of political action."[29]

Our continued interest and fascination with the Nazi period should keep us vigilant. "It is entirely possible that this is the end that awaits many races and nations—maybe all of them. And the Jews will then prove to have been the first victim of this new experiment." The question remains, Has "Auschwitz become an eternal warning or merely the first station on the road to the extermination of all races and the suicide of humanity"?[30]

ENDNOTES

*I am indebted to Dr. Steven Katz for his invaluable insights in reviewing this essay.

[1] Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 17-18.

[2] Richard Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), p. 7.

[3] Steven T. Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, vol. I, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 21.

[4] Ibid., pp. 66-68 and 96.

[5] Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps: North America Japanese in the United States and Canada During World War II* (Malabar: Florida, 1981), pp. 104-105; Donald E. Collins, *Native American Aliens: Disloyalty and the Renunciation of Citizenship by Japanese Americans During World War II* (Westport, Conn., 1985); John Modell, ed., *The Kikuchi Diary: Chronicle From an American Concentration Camp* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1973); Maisie and Richard Conrat, *Executive Order 9066: The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans* (California Historical Society, 1972); Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans 1942-1945* (London: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[6] Louis P. Lochner, *What about Germany?* (New York: Dodd-Meade, 1942); p. 2; Edouard Callic, ed., *Secret Conversations With Hitler*, trans. Richard Barry (New York: John Day, 1971), p. 81.

[7] Katz. op. cit. pp., 84-87.

[8] Yehuda Bauer, "Against Mystification," in *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 1978), pp. 36-37; Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1982), pp. 57-58; Katz, op. cit., p. 120; "The Historical Dimensions of the Armenian Question, 1878-1923," in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (New York: Transaction, 1986), pp. 19-41.

[9] Katz, op. cit., pp. 121, 123, and 127.

[10] Katz, op. cit., p. 21.

[11] Katz, op. cit., pp. 66-68 and 97.

[12] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction Of The European Jews*, vol. I, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), pp. 5-28.

[13] "Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust." (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1993), p. 5. Steven T. Katz defines the destruction of the Jews of Europe in this way: "The Holocaust is phenomenologically unique by virtue of the fact that never before has a state set out, as a matter of intentional principle and actualized policy, to annihilate physically every man, woman, and child belonging to a specific group." Katz, op. cit., p. 28.

[14] Guidelines, op. cit.

[15] Alex Bein, "The Jewish Parasite," *Leo Baeck Year Book* IX (New York: East and West Library, 1964): pp. 3-40; Franklin H. Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986); Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (New York: Meridian Press, 1961); Jacob L. Talmon, "European History: Seedbed of the Holocaust," *Midstream* XIX (May 1973): pp. 3-25; Jackson Spielvogel and David Redles, "Hitler's Racial Ideology: Content and Occult Sources," *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual* 3 (New York: Kraus International Publications, 1986), pp. 227-246; Shmuel Ettinger, "The Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism," in *The Catastrophe of European Jewry: Antecedents, History, Reflections*, eds. Yisrael Gutman and Livia Rothkirchen (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 3-39.

[16] N. Cameron and R. H. Stevens, trans., *Hitler's Table Talk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 332.

[17] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), pp. 293-296.

[18] Ibid., p. 60.

[19] Steve T. Katz, op. cit., p. 7.

[20] Hermann Rauschning, *Gesprache mit Hitler*, pp. 231 ff., quoted in Katz, op. cit., p. 7.

[21] Quoted in *The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler* by Robert Payne (London: Jonathan Cape LTD., 1973), p. 591.

[22] Katz, op. cit., p. 10.

[23] Bauer, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

[24] Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against The Jews* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), pp. 188-190.

[25] Ibid., pp. 190-191.

[26] Yehuda Bauer, "Gypsies," in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, ed. Yisrael Gutman, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), pp. 634-638.

[27] Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), pp. 453-455.

[28] Rubenstein, op. cit., p. 2.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Jacob L. Talmon, "European History as the Seedbed of the Holocaust," in *Holocaust and Rebirth* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1974), pp. 69 and 72.

WHERE ANNE FRANK LIVED

FRANKFURT AM MAIN, GERMANY • Anne Frank was born here on June 12, 1929 and remained in this city through the spring of 1933.

AACHEN, GERMANY •Anne, her mother, and sister stayed here with Anne's grandmother from summer of 1933 through beginning of 1934.

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS • Anne moved to Amsterdam in February, 1934.

WESTERBROOK, THE NETHERLANDS • In August, 1944, Anne and her family were sent to this concentration camp. Anne stayed here until September 1944.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU, POLAND • At the beginning of September 1944, Anne and her family were taken by closed train to this concentration camp.

BERGEN-BELSEN, GERMANY • Anne and her sister, Margot, were transferred here from Auschwitz-Berkenau at the end of 1944.

BASEL, SWITZERLAND • In 1933, Alice Frank-Stern, Anne's grandmother, moved here from Frankfurt am Main.

OSNABRUCK, GERMANY • The Van Pels family, who hid in the Secret Annex with the Franks, lived here before fleeing to Amsterdam in 1937.

The countries on this map were drawn with their 1939 boarders.

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ANNE FRANK'S WORLD

by Elma Verhey
An author of three books, she writes for *Vry Nederland*, a Dutch national weekly founded by the resistance in World War II

The time and place where Anne Frank was born, even if chosen, could hardly have been more unlucky. Germany had lost the First World War, resulting in an enormous crisis of identity as well as a disastrous economic breakdown. Millions of Germans were unemployed. In Frankfurt alone, where Anne lived, half the Jewish community lived beneath the poverty level.

Year by year, National Socialism continued to win a greater following while the idea grew that the Jews were the cause of all this misery. And added to misery, there was fear. Because of the Jews, Hitler and his followers charged, Germany would soon be trampled under the foot of communist Russia.

The anti-Jewish sentiment in Germany must have come as an enormous shock to Otto Frank, Anne's father. Firstly, he saw himself as a German[1]—viewed his Jewishness as only a secondary matter. This perspective resulted from his late 19th century liberal middle-class upbringing which took place during the Golden Age of German Jewry. Ironically, modern German history is not only dominated by the Shoah, the Holocaust. Jews also played a dominant role as famous musicians, painters, writers, politicians, philosophers, scientists and industrialists. Until the 1930s, these Jews were widely admired and respected in Germany.

When Otto Frank was born in 1880 the last remnants of the ghetto of Frankfurt had just been torn down.[2] Up to the beginning of the 19th century, the Jews in Germany were forced to live together in ghettos. They had no civil rights. They could marry only other Jews and were allowed to practice only a small number of professions, mainly in the trades. Also, they were not permitted to own land.

After hundreds of years of repression and persecution, the early 19th century finally brought

new liberalism and civil rights for Jews. For most German Jews, leaving the ghetto meant the beginning of their social and economic advancement. At the same time, this often meant a break with Jewish traditions. In order to gain increased acceptance in the wider community, many Jews no longer observed Jewish laws. They did not give their children any traditional first names, and sought above all to be as little "Jewish" as possible to the outside world.

The grandparents of Otto Frank had chosen this approach. Wanting to be accepted by non-Jews, they saw assimilation as the only possible way to build a solid and secure life in Germany. Otto Frank and his brothers did not attend any Jewish schools, did not receive any Hebrew or Jewish instruction, and did not celebrate their bar mitzvahs.[3] "At home" in Germany, they were declared opponents of Zionism, the movement which—under the influence of nationalism, but also responding to rising antisemitism—advocated a Jewish state.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Zionism in Germany gained a following mostly among poor Eastern European Orthodox Jewish refugees.[4] Many German Jews saw the arrival of this orthodox group—which irritated the non-Jews because they lived close together, spoke Yiddish, and wore traditional dress—as a threat to their own advancement in becoming part of the German landscape. In the mid-19th century Otto Frank's father, Michael, was drawn to Frankfurt from a small town in the countryside. In Frankfurt, there was a large Jewish community enjoying economic opportunity and where Michael found great tolerance. Before the Second World War, Frankfurt had a Jewish mayor and Jews had joined the city council. Proportionately, more Jews were elected to the council than might have been expected from their small numbers.

Newlyweds Otto and Edith Frank, 1925

Michael Frank made a fortune investing in businesses and finally set up his own bank. At the beginning of the century the family moved to a villa in Westend, the rich modern section of Frankfurt where about twenty percent of the inhabitants were Jewish. The family enjoyed a box at the opera. The children went to the university, rode horses, played chamber music, and took luxurious vacation trips. In all respects the Franks seemed the ideal family. For many German Jews they were a successful model. Not only had the Franks gained economic and social advancement, but they also gained acceptance among wealthy non-Jews.

These favorable conditions for the Frank family continued during the First World War. At least in the beginning, the war didn't significantly change this. Otto's mother volunteered as a nurse, and Otto and his brothers fought at the Front. The Reichsverbund Juedischer Frontsoldaten

(Union of Jewish Soldiers Serving at the Front) had 40,000 members, four times as many as the Zionist movement. No one thought it unusual that a rabbi led prayers in an army uniform. To the contrary,[5] finally Jews were now in a position where they could prove how "German" they felt and how positively they identified themselves as a part of the nation.

The First World War and the economic crisis which followed brought enormous losses for the Frank family's bank.[6] Neither Otto nor his brothers had shown interest in their father's business, apparently viewing the "money business" too much as a "traditional Jewish occupation." The family tried to salvage what could be saved, but without much success. In the mid-1920s Otto Frank lost much of the family's capital in an effort to set up a branch of the bank in the Netherlands. In 1932 one of the Frank brothers was arrested on suspicion of stock market fraud. He did not wait for his trial to begin, but fled to France. Soon after the scandal, the *Bankgeschaeft Michael Frank* closed its doors in an infamous death, and the rest of the family also left the country.

Despite the difficult experience with the bank, Otto Frank still found it hard to make a clean break and put Germany behind him. As one indication of Otto Frank's longing for the tolerant middle-class society of his childhood, he never described his departure from Frankfurt as a "flight". In later years, he said that he, personally, had never met a single antisemite in prewar Germany.[7] Yet not much remained of the Germany that Otto Frank once loved so much and still longed for. In February, 1933, a few months before Anne's father decided to leave for the Netherlands, Adolf Hitler had become Chancellor of the Reich. His fascist followers terrorized the streets. Existing laws were simply brushed aside and political opponents were arrested and imprisoned in concentration camps.

In 1933, the first measures against Jews were taken. Jewish civil servants lost their jobs—lecturers, professors, lawyers, notaries, doctors . . . . The public was called upon not to buy from Jews, and Jewish children were banished to separate Jewish schools. This was the destiny hanging over the heads of Anne and her sister, Margot. For Otto Frank, who wanted to give his children a liberal, non-Jewish upbringing—the type that he, himself, had received—the idea of separate Jewish schools must have been a horror.

In August, 1933, when Otto Frank registered his name in the municipal records of Amsterdam, emigration was still relatively easy. Germany was eager to be relieved of the Jews and encouraged them to leave. Meanwhile the Netherlands had few restrictions on refugees, at least for people of sufficient wealth who could prove—if necessary with the help of the Dutch Jewish community—that they would not become a financial burden on the Dutch state.[8] As in most other countries, those lacking money or support simply could not cross the border. Great numbers of German Jews remained behind in Germany and ultimately met their end in the extermination camps. Some stayed because they could not believe that Germany—where for so many years Jews could count on tolerance and legal protection—could now, in the 1930s, descend to such barbarism. Others, whatever

their fears, stayed because they had no possibilities to flee abroad.

Otto Frank did not require the help of the Jewish community in the Netherlands. His sister and brother-in-law had fled earlier to Switzerland where the two set up a company to manufacture and sell pectin, an ingredient used by housewives for making jam. After taking care of the formalities and finding a place to live, Otto had his wife and two daughters join him. The daughters, attending a non-Jewish modern school in a neighborhood which was progressive for its time, quickly learned Dutch. It appeared that the Franks had adjusted well to the situation, but this was not entirely correct.

The Frank family could not have been blind to the increasing anti-Jewish sentiment not only in Germany but in the Netherlands, too, a country with one of the largest Nazi parties Europe. Although in 1933 rich refugees had been able to enter the Netherlands rather easily, that changed quickly. The Christian political parties in particular saw Hitler both as the man who wanted to solve the "Jewish Question" in Germany and as the one who would thwart communism which was being blamed for the ruination of the country. That Hitler offered to solve the Jewish question, apparently was of little interest to most Dutch or at least they minimized the problem. Of primary concern, the Netherlands (during a period of worldwide depression) was in a deep economic crisis. Hundreds of thousands of Dutch families received a few guilders a week from the Dutch government.

Even in the Jewish community in Holland—which had first responded positively to the arrival of their German co-religionists—there began to be worries and mixed feelings.[9] Dutch Jews, anticipating that the increased emigration would stimulate further antisemitism, feared for their own position. Although Jews had been tolerated and had never experienced serious persecution, there was still a degree of antisemitism in the country. Centuries of Christian religious indoctrination—that "the Jews had murdered Jesus Christ"—had taken its effect.

The economic crisis in Holland further pauperized many Jews who were already living under poorer conditions than the non-Jews in the country. This group, especially, regarded the incoming wealthy German Jews as competition. During the thirties more obstacles yet were created to prevent Jews from entering the Netherlands. Refugees were refused work permits and establishing a business became nearly impossible. After 1938 the border between Holland and Germany was completely shut and German refugees were interned in camps. Yet this did not lead to protests by the local population—not even from the Dutch Jews.

Westerbork was used by the Nazis as the most important transit camp for Jews on the way to the extermination camps. The original residents of the camp, the German Jews, were used to dispatch transports in the loathsome game of "divide and conquer", a practice the Nazis mastered to perfection. Through this process, the relationships between German and Dutch Jews obviously

worsened.

There was also a religious setting for the tension between German and Dutch Jews.[10] Eighty percent of the Jews in Germany had belonged to the Reform movement, largely in response to their need to be accepted and to become a part of the community. In the Netherlands, the Reform movement had languished. Suddenly this began changing, with the strong influx of German Jews who, especially in Amsterdam, quickly set the tone for the Reform Judaism. For the first time a fixed location was found for religious services and a rabbi was hired. This displeased the Dutch Chief Rabbinate which previously had refused to recognize the Reform movement. German Jews who joined the Reform temple were even threatened by the Dutch Jewish community with the loss of financial support—a frightening matter, since in the worst case this could result in the refugees being expelled from the Netherlands.[11]

Anne Frank's mother, Edith Holländer, must have suffered as a result of the religious conflict. As with Otto Frank, she, too, came from a wealthy, prominent Jewish family. Although not brought up Orthodox, her ties with Judaism were stronger than those of her husband. At the request of her family, the wedding was consecrated in the Reform Jewish synagogue of Achen, the German city in which Edith lived. Although it appears that she did not have much to do with Judaism in the first years of her marriage, these new conditions changed her attitude. Under the pressure of intensifying antisemitism, many German Jews sought comfort and support together by joining the Reform movement. This did not apply to Otto Frank. Only after the war, when confronted with the disastrous consequences of the murder of so many Jews, would he become interested in the Jewish religion. For a short period he even became a member of the board of the Reform Jewish community in Amsterdam. He also overcame his anti-Zionist feelings and visited Israel a few times. What impact this visit had on him remains a question. Yet, as one journalist observed, "It is obvious that it [Israel] did not make his heart throb".[12]

"Papa with his kids" Anne and Margot, 1930

In the 1930s, Otto Frank knew so little about Dutch-Jewish relationships that he tried to register his family with the Orthodox community. To his surprise, he was told that he "would have to have a new marriage ceremony",[13] since the Orthodox rabbinate did not recognize the Reform movement (including the one in Germany).

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For Edith Frank, as for a great many German Jews, the weekly visit to the Reform synagogue must have been an important social experience. Where her husband found contacts in his work, through the children in school and through the neighborhood, she missed her family, friends and acquaintances. She also missed the German language and culture.[14] It was no accident that Otto Frank hired a German-speaking staff for his firm in the Netherlands. During his first years he must have also wrestled with the Dutch language; yet, like most of the Jewish refugees, the Frank family had few Dutch friends or acquaintances. From the perspective of the Jews of the time—the vast majority of Dutch Jewry was poor to very poor—the Franks lived in a wealthy new neighborhood with so many German refugees that in Amsterdam the joke went around that "the conductor of tramline eight also spoke Dutch".[15]

Yet this remark was full of irony. The refugees were derisively called "chez nous", since in their midst one so frequently heard the phrase: "bei uns zu Hause ist alles viel besser".[16] [Everything at home (Germany) is so much better]. To the Dutch, many refugees behaved arrogantly and had made it abundantly clear that they definitely preferred Berlin or Frankfurt to the rigid, much less polished Amsterdam. One liberal non-Jewish weekly even published a "code of behavior" for the newcomers: "Do not speak German on the street . . . Do not attract attention by speaking loudly and dressing loudly . . . Study and follow the ways of the land".[17]

In complete conformance with their own protected upbringing, Otto and Edith Frank kept their children (as much as possible) away from everyday problems. Anne Frank lived in a relatively undisturbed children's world full of little boy and girl friends, a world of petty quarrels and jealousies, outings to the movie theater or ice cream parlor, and schoolgirl worry about the report card and her exterior appearance.

She began her diary on her thirteenth birthday. There were all sorts of gifts: books, money, games, flowers. She gave a party, treated her classmates to the movies and brought cookies to school. In today's terms, it does not seem exceptional. It was certainly not at all that "common" before the war, and certainly not in July, 1942, by which time the Nazis had already occupied the Netherlands for two years.

Anne writes in one of her first letters to Kitty, her imaginary girlfriend, that Jews must wear a star, may no longer use the tram, or go to the swimming pool, and that they must turn in their bicycles and buy only at Jewish shops. However horrible these measures, they were but a small part of the real drama already under way for two years under Nazi occupation. All Jewish civil servants had been fired. Hundreds of Jews were molested. Roundups were carried out. Scores of people had been killed, and about 150 Jews—sometimes entire families—had in desperation committed suicide. This contributed to the demoralization of the other Jews.

Anne reported nothing about the difficult years of the 1930s in the Netherlands, about her

trips to Germany up to 1939 to visit family and friends where the situation for Jews became increasingly difficult. Just as Otto Frank said that before the war he had never met an antisemite in Germany, so Anne Frank, protected by her middle class environment, would scarcely have understood the kind of world in which she lived. How incomprehensibly great must have been her shock once she fell in the hands of the Nazis? One witness who had been on the same deportation train as Anne said that the Frank sisters had no idea of what was in store for them. With their knapsacks and their beautiful leisure clothes, they looked as if they were on their way "to a ski vacation".[18]

Anne Frank was crazy about her father. She lovingly called him "Pim". Of all the adults described in her diary, he is the only one whom she finds "normal". The relationship with her mother was poor. When Edith wanted to pray with her in hiding, Anne refused. She had no interest in Jewish prayer and believed that her mother was trying to force "ultra-religious" behavior on her. Ann reads the New Testament, a present from her father. Otto wanted to give the bible to her on Hanukkah, but Margot stopped him because she thought it inappropriate. Margot was attracted more to her mother, went to synagogue with her, took Jewish lessons, and even dreamed of becoming a nurse in Palestine.

By contrast, Anne wanted to go to Paris after the war and was angry about Peter who mocked Jesus Christ. She seldom wrote about the Friday night sabbath observance (which was celebrated, even in hiding),[19] and the diary mentions only perfunctorily one visit to the synagogue. During her years in hiding Anne prays with increasing frequency, but the God to whom she prays is an ecumenical Greater Being who must care for peace in the world and must free her from her anxiety. Just as Otto Frank was the product of his upbringing, so Anne appears especially to have adopted his ideas about religion. Also, in Anne's idealistic, apolitical view of the world we find the 19th century tolerance of the middle-class society to which Otto Frank longed to return.

Otto, the only surviving member of the Frank family, never corrected his daughter's diary. He confirmed a picture of Anne holding only a limited view of what went on in the outside world while she wrote lyrically about Dutchmen helping the Jews. In interviews,[20] he told little or nothing about the difficulties facing Jews in the 1930s, about the extremely high number of Jewish victims in the Netherlands, about Dutchmen who in great numbers voluntarily entered the SS, who helped with the roundups, or those who, for example, betrayed the Frank family. Otto Frank preached forgiveness and was convinced that the Security Police (SD) who came to arrest the Frank family would have preferred to let them go.[21]

Also, as if living in denial, Otto Frank wanted, he repeatedly said, not to look "backward" but "forward".[22] He knew that most of the readers of the diary would scarcely realize the horrible way in which Anne was murdered. He especially believed that the process of reaching physical and spiritual adulthood, as Anne described in her diary, would appeal to young women. This was fine with him. He did nothing to correct the popular myth that Anne died "peacefully". . . "conscious

that nothing grave happened to her".[23] Otto Frank saw his daughter's diary as a means to spread the ideals he continued to believe until his dying day.

This explains his remarkable visit to the Pope, his trips to Germany, and his acceptance of a Volkswagen[24]—a symbol of Germany—as a gesture of German conciliation. Full of pride, he referred to a letter of a befriended Catholic priest who prayed to Anne as if she were a saint and who looked on her diary as "the fruit which grew from the suffering of the Jews".[25]

Just as he hesitated to look back at the murder of Jews, Otto Frank consented that Anne's Jewish background should play a less central role in the public consciousness of his daughter's life. In the German translation of the diary, he did not object that the very negative remarks about the Germans should be deleted.[26] Sometime earlier, he had approved that (for the Dutch market) the comments on sexuality and on the sexual nuances in the diary should be edited out. For the theater script on Broadway, he gave his approval that elements could be added which made the story more sensational and more suspenseful but which, in actuality, never took place.

To his dying day in 1980, Otto Frank took every opportunity to make Anne's diary as widely known as possible.[27] He granted countless interviews, opened exhibitions, and accepted awards. His accommodating attitude toward the myths created about his daughter undoubtedly contributed to its worldwide success. Ann Frank is perhaps the most famous child of the Twentieth Century. After the Bible, seemingly no other book is more well-known.

Otto Frank believed that anyone who wished could identify with the hopeful message of his daughter's diary. Up to the present, the Anne Frank Foundation seemingly shares in this wish, and has refused to cooperate in the production of a documentary film which described the last months of her life.[28] The Anne Frank Foundation apparently feared that her horrible death would shock the public and detract from the diary's message. What that message is, and a source from which the Anne Frank Foundation finds support for its objective of fighting today's racism and discrimination, Anne Frank wrote, herself, on July 15th, 1944. In numerous interviews or conversations, her father cited these same sentences from her diary:

> "It is a great miracle that I have not given up my expectations, because they seem absurd and unattainable. Nevertheless, I hold onto them, despite everything, because I still believe in the inner goodness of man. It is impossible for me to build everything on the basis of death, misery, and confusion."

Anne Frank could not know that her hiding place would be discovered two weeks later. At the extermination camp at Auschwitz her hair was shaved off, a number was tattooed on her arm, and she was robbed of all her human dignity. She died at the end of February or the beginning of March, 1945—even the exact date is unknown—in Bergen Belsen, at the age of fifteen. She died

alone, exhausted, covered with sores, apathetic with hunger, deathly sick and without anyone to care for her. A short while before, her sister Margot, who slept next to her on the same wooden plank and in the same barracks, had perished in the same cruel manner. Anne did not know her mother's fate (her mother died earlier in Auschwitz) nor did she know the fate of the Pels family which had been in hiding with the Frank family, or of the dentist, Pfeffer, with whom she shared her room in hiding and hated so much. Nor did she know about Peter Pels whom she loved so much and to whom she had devoted so many pages of her diary. They all died.

To some, at least, it seems perverse to even wonder if, during the last months of her life, Anne Frank still trusted in "the goodness of Man".

ENDNOTES

[1] Interwiew with Otto Frank, *Basler Magazin*, Number 8, 24 February 1979.

[2] For the history of the Jews in the city of Frankfurt and of the Frank family, see: *Frueher wohnten wir in Frankfurt. . . . Frankfurt am Main und Anne Frank* (1985), publication of Historical Musuem of Frankfurt am Main and *Anne a us Frankfurt, Leben und Lebebswelt Anne Franks* (1994), also published by the Historical Museum.

[3] Interview with Otto Frank, *Israelitisches Wochenblat*, 16 February 1979.

[4] Wolfgang Benz, *Das Exil der kleine Leute, Alltagserfabrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration* (Munich, 1991), p. 14.

[5] Volker Jakob and Annet van der Voort, *Anne Frank war nicht allein, Lebensgeschichten deutscher Juden in den Niederlanden* (Berlin-Bonn, 1988), p. 27.

[6] For the affair of the bank of Michael Frank, see: *The Diary of Anne Frank, The Critical Edition* eds. David Barnouw and Gerrold Van der Stroom, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans and B. M. Mooyart-Doubleday (New York: Doubleday, 986), *passim*.

[7] Ernst Schnabel, *Anne Frank, Spur eines Kindes* (Frankfurt am Main, 1958), p. 14. An English translation of this book is available under the title, *The Footsteps of Anne Frank* (London: Pan Books, 1961).

[8] *Nederland en het Duitse exil*, 1933-1940, eds. Kathinka Dittrich and Hans Wuerzner (Amsterdam, 1982).

[9] *Ibid.*, 105.

[10] Dan Michman. Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland, 1929-1943 (Amsterdam, 1988).

[11] *Ibid.*, 107.

[12] Interview with Otto Frank, *Haagse Post*, 1 August 1969.

[13] Information courtesy of Rabbi David Lilienthal, Amsterdam.

[14] Miep Gies, *Herinneringen aan Anne Frank* (Amsterdam, 1988), p. 35. An English edition appeared: Miep Gies with
Leslie Gold, Anne Frank Remembered, The Story of Miep Gies who helped to hide the Frank family (London: Bantam Press, 1987).

[15] *Ibid.*,31.

[16] Nederland en het Duitse exil (Amsterdam, 1982), p 215.

[17] *Ibid.*, 102.

[18] Willy Lindwer, *De laatste zeven maanden in het spoor van Anne Frank* (Hilversum, 1988), p. 69.

[19] Interview with Otto Frank, *Hervormd Nederland*, 3 February 1979.

[20] Interview with Otto Frank, *Basler Magazin*, No. 8 (24 February 1979). In this interview Otto Frank stated, in
response to the reporter's remark that the Dutch behaved in an "exemplary manner" toward the Jews: "Yes, the Dutch helped us very much . . . When and where was there ever such a people in history!"

[21] Ernest Schnabel, *Anne Frank, Spur eines Kindes* (Frankfurt am Main, 1958), p. 124.

[22] Interview with Otto Frank, *Haagse Post*, 3 August 1968.

[23] Ernst Schnabel, *Anne Frank, Spur eines Kindes* (Frankfurt am Main, 1958), p. 163. See also Otto Frank's interview in the Haagse Post, 1 August 1969, where Otto Frank said, " We must not flog the past, would you please understand this? Schnabel in his book, *Spur eines Kindes*, has written all that can be said. It is a unique book. Everything about Anne is in it. Yes, we must know the past, but we must build for the future. And the future is the Anne Frank Foundation which works here."

[24] Press release, *Volkskrant*, 7 February 1959.

[25] Interview with Otto Frank, *Het Vrije Volk*, 1 April 1957.

[26] For the deletions in the Diary and for the creation of the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, see the *Critical Edition*, op. cit. Also, James E. Young, *The Anne Frank House, Holland's Memorial 'Shrine of the Book'*, in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, published by The Jewish Museum, New York (March 1994), p. 134.

[27] Otto Frank died in Switzerland, where he lived since 1952. He was creamated, and his urn was placed in the public cemetary of Basel. Information courtesy of Rabbi A. Soetendorp.

[28] Information courtesy of Willy Lindwer. *De laaste Zeven maanden, vrouwen in het spoor van Anne Frank [The last Seven Months, Women search for Anne Frank]* is the title of a documentary film, released in 1988. The author also published a book bearing the same title.

ANNE FRANK AND THE DUTCH MYTH

By Elma Verhey
An author of three books, she writes for *Vry Nederland*, a Dutch national weekly founded by the resistance in World War II

"Desecration of the child, Anne Frank, and desecration of all who were martyred".[1] Thus wrote an indignant Dutch weekly about *The Diary of Anne Frank* which premiered on Broad way in 1955. Anne Frank was transformed into a "sexy" teenager, her father into the stereotype of a "noble Jew", and Miep Gies into a "comical Aryan" who gave a little help to "you poor Jews".

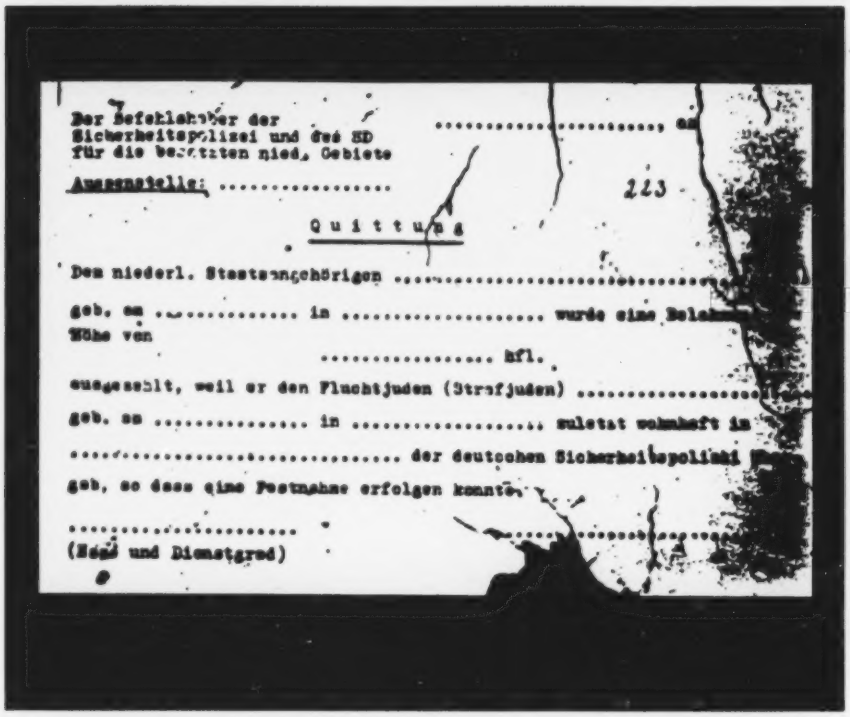
This would not be the last time that Anne Frank was criticized in the Dutch press. Recently, a newspaper published a full page advertisement calling for the closing of the Anne Frank House. The paper claimed that of six hundred thousand visitors who were "pushed" through the building annually "on their pilgrimage," one typically saw nothing more than "the back of the person who stood in line before him".[2] The article caused an avalanche of negative reactions, but also drew some support.

Otto Frank, the only member of the Frank family who survived the war, once explained why he gave few interviews in Holland.[3] It was really necessary for him to "hold back" there. "You know how it is", he confided to the reporter. "In the Netherlands I can sense a certain resistance, conscious or unconscious . . . Here they lived through it all. Thousands of people died here. . . Thus, there is a certain feeling: Why Anne Frank?"

Indeed, it is not only the exclusive attention to Anne Frank which has caused her name to evoke mixed feelings. Not all Dutchmen find it fitting that the Anne Frank House has developed into one of the most important tourist attractions of Amsterdam. Many Dutch Jews avoid the Anne Frank House because of some of the myths created by her diary.[4] Moreover, there has been concern that the Foundation has in the past paid more attention to a handful of neo-Nazis in Germany, as well as focused more on the plight of the Palestinians, than on the state-sponsored antisemitism of

the former Soviet Union.[5]

Holland did not join the resistance in massive numbers, as Anne suggested in her diary[6] Actually, very few extended a helping hand when their Jewish neighbors or colleagues were deported. Indeed, the Netherlands holds the record for the highest percentage of victims of all the occupied countries of Western Europe. Dutch civil servants supplied Jewish addresses. Dutch policemen forcibly removed them from their homes. Dutch tram conductors transported them to the train stations, and the Dutch Railways sent itemized invoices to the Nazi headquarters for adding extra trains to the Westerbork transit camp (train number 11537, departure Amsterdam: 2:16 a.m., arrival in Hooghalen at 5:58 a.m., with intermediate stops in Amersfoort and Zwolle).[7] Without the cooperation of the Dutch civil service and its bureaucracy, the extermination of more than one hundred thousand Jews—some eighty percent of all Jews who lived in Holland before the war—could not have been possible.



date . . .

Chief of Secret Police and SD for occupied Netherlands Post: . . .

RECEIPT
The Dutch subject . . . born, (date) . . . (place of birth) . . .
is to receive a reward to the value of . . . D.fl. the reason being that a fugitive Jew (Strafjuden)
Born (date) . . . (place of birth) . . . whose last address was . . .
has been disclosed/ delivered to the German Security Police, so that an arrest could be made.

. . .
(name and rank)

The Dutch were ill-prepared practically and psychologically for the occupation. For years, political parties minimized or even denied the gravity of events in Germany. The Dutch government regarded measures against Jews, such as incarcerating them in camps, as "not intended as punishment. . . but to make the concerned suited to live free in the National-Socialist German

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Reich.[8] With such measures, the government tried to ingratiate itself with Hitler. During the First World War, the Netherlands had succeeded in remaining "neutral"—now its leadership hoped to do so again.

The extent to which the Netherlands accommodated Hitler can be seen in the events involving the dentist Fritz Pfeffer who hid with the Frank family, and, to the great discomfort of Anne who had to share her bedroom with him. Pfeffer fled Germany in 1938 along with his non-Jewish girl-friend. He tried to marry her in Amsterdam, but the authorities refused[9] because, since 1935, Hitler had forbidden mixed marriages. To avoid offending the Germans as little as possible, this measure was also applied to German refugees living in the Netherlands. Had Pfeffer succeeded in marrying his friend, then he, like most mixed-married Jews, probably would have survived the war.

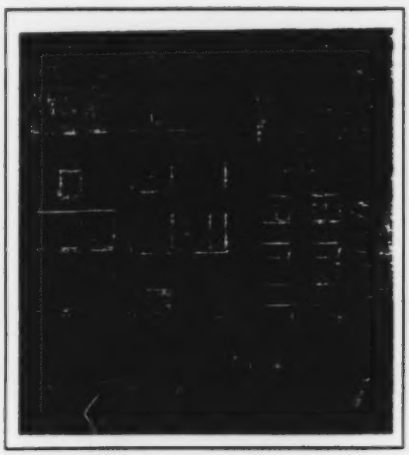
Most Jews also underestimated the German danger posed to them. For centuries the Netherlands had accepted the Jews, who had lived there with relatively few problems. This created an illusion of safety. A well-known Jewish professor wrote in 1939 that his "head and heart" convinced him that "the blackest times of human history would not return".[10] Even the arrival of thousands of German refugees to the Netherlands did not seem to frighten Dutch Jewry. Given the economic crisis, the major concern of Dutch Jews was the competition posed by these emigrants. And in the 1930s, relatively few Dutch Jews saw emigration to Palestine or to the United States as a solution to their problems.

In May, 1940, when the German army invaded the Netherlands, the Dutch military capitulated within a few days. The Royal family fled to England along with government officials and senior members of the bureaucracy, making it simpler for the German occupiers to fill the power vacuum. The remaining positions were filled by German SS officials or by members of the Dutch National-Socialist party whose following grew by leaps and bounds in the first years of the war. The Dutch press was now censured, trade unions and political parties were forbidden, and the parliament dissolved. With the enactment of one measure after another, the Netherlands slowly came under the domination of Nazi-Germany.

Not long after the Nazis consolidated their power in Holland, they initiated the first anti-Jewish measures. All Dutch officials had to sign the so-called "Aryan Declaration", whose intent was the removal of their Jewish colleagues. Not more than about ten people in the whole country refused to sign the declaration.[11] Even the Supreme Court—the body which would have been the most ideal to set an example of protest against such a flagrant transgression of the most basic of civil rights—did not react when its most respected Chief Justice, Mr. L.E. Visser, was fired in November 1940 because he was Jewish.

The extent to which the Jewish community considered itself "taken by surprise" by the events is demonstrated during the first days of the occupation, when about one hundred fifty Jews

committed suicide. Among them were well-known professors and politicians. [12] In panic, hundreds of others tried to escape on the last boats to England or to flee to Belgium in a desperate attempt to reach Switzerland, Spain, or the unoccupied southern part of France.[13] Most did not succeed and returned home where they waited in fearful resignation for the first anti-Jewish measures. In addition to civil servants, Jewish professors and journalists were also fired, as were those in the civil guard who scanned the skies for enemy planes.



The Secret Annex as seen from the rear courtyard garden. The branches of the chestnut tree are on the right.

Jews were no longer welcome. Jewish businesses were forced to register. Kosher slaughter of animals was forbidden. In hotels, movie theaters, and cafes, signs appeared with the message: "Forbidden for Jews". Jews hoped that if matters did not deteriorate any further, it might be possible to survive.

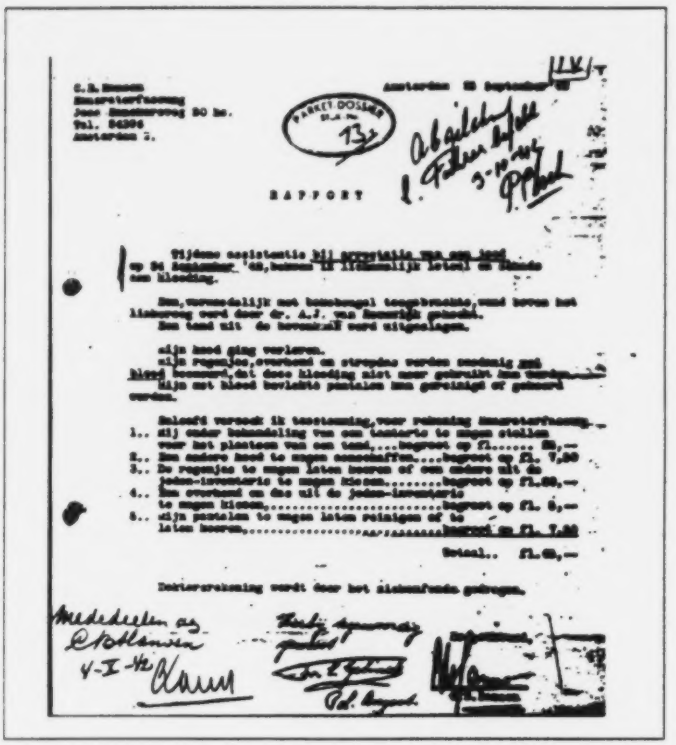
Nazi propaganda was calculated to arouse hatred against the Jews. On Sunday morning, February 9, 1941, members of the National Socialist party marched through the Jewish quarter in the center of Amsterdam. They smashed all the window panes. In the following days this led to street fights in which one of the top-ranking members of the National Socialist Party lost his life. The Germans reacted quickly. Four hundred and fifty young Jewish men were rounded up and sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, established shortly after March, 1938. In the weeks that followed in the Nazi roundup, "death notices" arrived in rapid succession.

To the public, Mauthausen represented the very image of terror. Few if any had yet heard of places such as Auschwitz, Sobibor, or Treblinka. During the course of 1941-1942 more and more anti-Jewish measures were enacted, making the lives of Jews more difficult and increasing their isolation. On Sunday, July 5, 1942, four thousand Jews received a green card[14] by special registered mail summoning them for what turned out to be the first transport to Auschwitz. The green card was a summons for the "work force in Germany", the euphemistic term by which the murder of the Jews was "packaged". Among those who received this green card was Margot Frank, since German refugees older than sixteen and younger than forty were the first to be deported. That day also marked a turning point in Anne Frank's life—it was the immediate cause for her going into hiding. The Frank family hastily packed some of their belongings and left the following Monday morning for the "Annex".

For weeks, Amsterdam had been full of rumors about the deportation of the Jews to Poland.[15] And if no one yet knew that the "work camps" were, in reality, extermination camps, the majority understood that it meant something ominous. Like Margot Frank, most people stayed

Amsterdam
September 25th 1942
(not granted by decree of Fuhrer) 3-10-42

REPORT
While assisting with the arrest of a Jew on September 24th 1942 I suffered bodily injuries and my clothing was damaged. A wound, above the left eye, probably caused by a knuckleduster, was stitched by Dr. A.J. van Reeuwijk. An upper tooth was knocked out. My hat got lost. My raincoat, shirt and tie were smeared with blood, I cannot wear these things any more. My trousers, also smeared with blood, can be cleaned or turned. I kindly request compensation for: 1. treatment at the dentist's for a new tooth, *f*25.; 2. buying a new hat, *f*7.50; 3. repairing of my raincoat or obtaining another one out of Jewish possessions, *f*20.; 4. choosing a shirt and tie out of Jewish possessions, *f*5.; 5. cleaning or repairing my trousers, *f*7.50. Total *f*65.
The doctor's bill will be paid by the health security scheme. Yours faithfully
(signed) C.B. Hansen



away. The Nazis responded by arresting seven hundred Jews, at random, and threatened to send them to "concentration camps". The idea of what happened to the four hundred fifty Jews at Mauthausen compelled hundreds of people to volunteer to register[16]. Jews convinced themselves that the Nazis saw them as indispensable for the war industry. Many presumed that life in the "work camps" would be extremely difficult. But at least, they thought, they would not be murdered. In its naiveté the Jewish Council established, in 1941—under pressure from the Nazis to maintain order and carry out their directives—published a pamphlet urging Jews to register.[17] The Council hoped that this way they would prevent "worse" measures from being enacted against them.

Ten days after the call-up, on July 15, 1942, the first train departed for Auschwitz with a total of 1,137 Jews. In the days, weeks and months that followed, one train after another with thousands of people departed for the East. About two years later, on September 3, 1944, the last transport with 1,019 persons left for Auschwitz. This train carried Anne Frank and her family. The Netherlands was now, as the Nazi's called it, "Judenrein"—cleansed of Jews.

If the first groups of Jews believed that they were going to "work camps", rumors now persisted about gas chambers and annihilation. People tried in every conceivable way to avoid deportation. They tried with doctors' letters saying they were sick . . . with declarations from their employers that they were "indispensable" . . . with papers attesting that they were permitted to

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enter Palestine . . . that they had a job at the Jewish Council. In many cases, it meant a stay of execution. Every week, every day of delay, there was always a possibility that a train strike would occur and make the deportations impossible, that the invasion of the Allied armies would come, or that there would be an attempt on Hitler's life. But these dreams were in vain. By the time the Allied armies landed in France in June, 1944, the great majority of Dutch Jews had already been murdered.

Anne Frank, June 1942

Going into hiding, which offered the best chance of survival, was within the reach of only a few Jews. Only an estimated ten- perhaps twenty- thousand people, succeeded in finding a hiding place. It might have been otherwise, had it not been for the indifference of many Dutch, and the helpless isolation of the Jews. Of this number in hiding, about half were betrayed.[18] The famous Dutch tolerance which for centuries had allowed Jews to be accepted with relatively few difficulties, proved to have another side.

In contrast to Germany where Jews had been had been assimilated, the majority of Jews in Holland lived in a type of ghetto even though they had been legally free to reside elsewhere. The Netherlands, where religion determined the country's political and social life, was "pillarized," a term used to describe a uniquely Dutch arrangement by which each of the major religious communities—Calvinists, Protestants, and Catholics—were recognized along with their special separate needs. Catholics, main-line Protestants, and Calvinist Protestants each lived in their own strictly separate world, with their own neighborhoods, political parties, youth movements, businesses and trade unions. The liberals, socialists and communists tried to organize Dutchmen on other than religious lines, but succeeded only after the war. Unfortunately, this breakthrough would come too late for Jews.

The majority of Jews lived in Amsterdam where they frequently had only Jewish contacts. And even if they had the money to go into hiding, to whom could they turn? Most Jews were too poor to secure a hiding place. It was only non-Jews who were in a position to protect them from deportation. The high concentration of Jews in certain neighborhoods worked to their disadvantage. The accommodating civil servants of Amsterdam prepared maps for the Nazis on which "each dot indicated ten Jews"[19] The Nazis knew exactly which streets and in which neighborhoods they should carry out their round ups, and in which houses they should search. Along with the policy of the Jewish Council —which advised against going into hiding[20]—it becomes clear to what extent the Dutch Jews were literally sitting ducks.

The Diary of Anne Frank further demonstrates how difficult it was for most Jews to find a safe refuge. Otto Frank benefited from an atypical situation because he owned his own hiding place. In

his office on the Prinsengracht, in a non-Jewish neighborhood, there was an empty annex. Since the office had its own storage place where the loading and unloading of merchandise went on all the time, activity here did not attract too much attention. As well, the storage place had stools, tables, beds, plates, pans, heaters and everything conceivable necessary to house eight persons more or less comfortably. Additionally, there were bags of dried peas, potatoes, and canned vegetables stored away. Provision was also made for a radio, pharmaceuticals, and for heaps of books.

Aside from the Franks' possessing the necessary financial resources, they had another advantage. Otto Frank could ask his own business staff for their help. Without the support of those who would bring food or warn if something went wrong, refuge would have been impossible. Because Otto Frank was their employer, this must have made it easier for him to ask for help.

Anne Frank was not aware of all of these problems when she wrote her diary. How could she be? She was thirteen years old when she began writing, and grew up in a very protected, middle-class environment. Contacts with non-Jews were the most normal thing in her world. She did not know what had taken place in the Jewish neighborhoods during the months before she went underground.

On Monday morning, the 6th of July, 1942, the very day the deportations started, the door of Prinsengracht 463 was closed and, along with this, Anne's view of the outside world. At the very most, Anne could only speculate about the deportations and the life and death struggle taking place outside. Her reality became the Secret Annex, a world which was difficult enough. She lived with permanent anxiety of being discovered. . . with the irritations of having eight people locked together inside. . . with never being able to go outside. . . with having to be quiet as a mouse.

After her arrest, Anne Frank gave the impression of having almost "enjoyed" the train ride to the Westerbork transit camp[21]. For the first time in a long time she saw trees, flowers, light, and sun. She was finally free from all of the adults who had been driving her crazy for twenty-five months, twenty-four hours a day. And how perverse it also sounds—the "freedom" (such as Anne Frank naturally experienced after her arrest) may have been a relief to her. But it did not change her destiny. It only shows one more time how difficult it had been to be in hiding.

Nevertheless, in hiding, Anne had lived in relative luxury. She had felt protected by her parents and by the surroundings, even if ultimately they could not protect her from death. She had her books, her collection of movie stars on the wall. She did her homework, and birthdays were observed. Despite being in hiding, the life of the Franks was reasonably normal. For most children, however, going into hiding meant a radical break from everything and everyone who had ever represented security to them. No matter what, they could not permit themselves to be insufferable adolescents as Anne Frank sometimes appeared to be.

Only very few people were in a position, or were able, to accept the risk of sheltering a complete Jewish family. Most children were hidden separately from their parents and their siblings. A good many ended up in the countryside where they experienced the culture shock of living with Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox Calvinistic families—people who were totally strange to them. They passed as cousins or as children from the bombed out city of Rotterdam. Any reference to their Jewish background could be fatal—not only for them, but also for the people who hid them.

Along with the anxiety of being sent to a new address, assuming a false identity meant that the children must always be careful, and caused extra tensions for these children in a non-Jewish environment. In hiding, a good many children went through twenty to thirty different addresses. When the conditions became unsafe or the helpers could no longer live with the situation, a new hiding place had to be found. One can only guess what difficulties this created, particularly for the children. Time and again they had to adapt to a new environment, new "parents", and to a new identity.

Very small children, especially, experienced severe trauma during their period of hiding, the effects of which they would have to cope with throughout their lives.[22] The separation from their parents and their trusted surroundings was also difficult for older children to handle. But they could still understand that this was in their best interest. Younger children could not grasp why their parents "had abandoned them". Had they stopped loving them? Where they, the children, not nice enough? They felt they had been left in the lurch.[23]

Children who were slightly older, who were conscious of what was happening, frequently developed anxiety because of their Jewish identity; they not only grew anxious because of their non-Jewish surroundings but because of the persecution they witnessed with their very eyes. On the one hand, for reasons of security, they had to drop their Jewish identity; on the other hand, children grew confused because of differing religious motives and signals. Orthodox Calvinists were particularly motivated to give Jews a hiding place. They looked upon the Jews as "God's Chosen People". At the same time, their attitude toward Jews was negative—Jews had "murdered Jesus Christ". They were "on the wrong path". The Orthodox Calvinist theology demanded that the Jews be converted.

Generations of Catholics and Protestants had also been raised with similar dogmas about the Jews. Children particularly did not know how to stand up or confront the religiously inspired stereotypes which often prevailed in their hiding environment. After the war, a good man children wanted to become ministers, or priests, or nuns. Some had even become good antisemites.[24]

And even though there were, of course, countless people without any ulterior motives who were prepared to risk their own lives to take children into their homes, the adoption statistics indicate that not everyone took in a child for purely altruistic motives.[25] Children, especially babies,

had a better chance of finding a hiding place if they were very young. The high percentage of childless couples who took in a Jewish infant is striking. Undoubtedly they became very attached to the child whom they hid; and the children—who frequently did not know their true background—loved their adoptive parents the same as if they were their biological parents. After the war, a dramatic struggle broke out over the hidden Jewish children who survived.[26] Even during the war, members of the Dutch resistance prepared a draft of a law denying the Jewish community the right to decide the future of these children. Even surviving parents were not given their children back as a matter of course. They had to demonstrate that they were "appropriate" to raise these children.

After the war, hundreds of children remained with the "parents" who had hid them. They were raised as Catholics, Protestants, or as Orthodox Calvinists. A number of well-meaning non-Jews, considered this the only way to protect these children from further persecution. Some children were permanently separated from their parents. Brothers and sisters were raised in a separate environment. In many cases, they did not even know that there were surviving family members. Beyond the enormous consequences for the children themselves, the struggle for the Jewish war orphans left deep wounds in the Jewish community. The handful of children who survived the war represented the last shred of hope for them. Their loss was already so great.[27]

Before the war, ten percent of the population of Amsterdam was Jewish. When the war was over, whole blocks of apartments, whole streets—even whole neighborhoods—were left empty. A relatively high percentage of the surviving Dutch Jews emigrated to Israel or to the United States.[28] Jews not only had trouble retrieving their children, but also their jobs, their homes, and their property. After the war, there was generally an indifference by the Dutch population and the government to the Jewish suffering and antisemitism.[29] The fact that so many Dutchmen had been personally involved in the deportation process, or at best looked the other way when the Jews were taken away, undoubtedly had much to do with this denial.

Anne Frank, who with her diary proved to have told the truth so honestly without mincing words, would have added many pages—if she had only survived!

ENDNOTES

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[3] Interview with Otto Frank, *Haagse Post*, August 3, 1968.

[4] In a recent interview in the *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad* (Dec. 30, 1994) the Israeli ambassador to the Netherlands, M. Bayly, told how important was the influence of the *Diary of Anne Frank*, even in Israel. "When Israeli leaders come here, I always remove the phrase, 'Your

fantastic position during the war'".

[5] Floris B. Bakels, "Anne Frankstichting geen politieke club", *NRC*, August 3, 1968..

[6] On June 24, 1942, Anne wrote: "It is not the fault of the Dutchmen that we Jews have such misery",

[7] Dr. J. Presser, *Ondergang*. The Hague, 1977, I, 262

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[9] Nanda van der Zee, *De Kamergenoot van Anne Frank*. Amsterdam, 1990, p. 32.

[10] *Ondergang* II, 20.

[11] L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* IV. The Hague, 1972, 762-764.

[12] *Ondergang* I, 14-15.

[13] H. Wielek, *De oorlog die Hitler won*. Amsterdam, 1947.

[14] *Ibid.*, 144. See also *Ondergang* I, 251.

[15] *Wielek*, 142 and *Ondergang* I, 251.

[16] *Wielek* 148 and *Ondergang* I, 257.

[17] *Ondergang* I, 257.

[18] *Ondergang* II, 245.

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[20] *Ondergang* II, 260

[21] Ernst Schnabel, *Anne Frank, Spur eines Kindes*. Frankfurt am Main, 1958, pp. 121, 130.

[22] Hans Keilson, *Sequentielle Traumatisierung bei Kindern*. Stuttgart, 1979, 87.

[23] Elma Verhey, *Om het joodse kind*. Amsterdam, 1991, 28-39.

[24] *Sequentielle Traumatisierung*, 66-69

[25] *Om het joodse kind*, 15.

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[27] J. S. Fishman, "The Reconstruction of the Dutch Jewish Community and its Implications for the Writing of Contemporary Jewish History", in Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, 45 (1978), pp. 67-101.

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[29] Dienke Hondius, *Terugkeer, Antisemitism in Nederland rond de bevrijding*. The Hague, 1990.

A New Perspective On Helpers Of Jews During The Holocaust: The Case Of Miep And Jan Gies

by Drs. Dienke Hondius
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Recent studies of the Holocaust—utilizing interviews with two of the main "helpers" of the noted Anne Frank family in Holland—point to what is unique, exemplary and incomparable about such helpers on the one hand and yet ordinary, normal and universal on the other. This suggests a more complex scenario for helpers of Jews in hiding during the Holocaust—far more so, it turns out, than suggested by earlier stories of simple heroism.

Certain new, even disturbing, recollections in the study of Nazi history are fruitful and necessary, yet probably these will continue to shock, provoke and alarm some people. Until recently for some the Holocaust was considered an issue of the past unconnected with the modern life of postwar generations. Yet the Holocaust and its implications have now entered broader public discussion and individual consciousness. The continuing debate about the implications of the Holocaust brings a challenge to modern society, one that inspires reflection about moral attitudes and behavior in matters of justice and human rights.

This paper is about the "helpers" of Jews in hiding in the Netherlands during the Nazi occupation. The helpers include women and men not only from the Netherlands but from all over Europe, from Poland, Germany, Denmark, the Ukraine, Austria . . . . ordinary people who none the less proved themselves unique by making a crucial choice at one point in their lives . . . . The focus of this paper utilizes the testimonies of Miep Gies-Santrouschitz, originally from Vienna, and her husband Jan Gies, from Holland, two ordinary people who made this crucial choice and aided the Frank family, the Van Pels family and Mr. Pfeffer, the eight people in hiding in the Secret Annex about which Anne Frank wrote her now-famous diary.[1]

At the time of the Nazi occupation, Miep Gies was one of Otto Frank's secretaries. When the Frank family decided to go into hiding in the annex of the office of Prinsengracht 263, Otto

Frank asked Miep to help. For more than two years, from July 1942 until their betrayal and arrest in August of 1944, Miep Gies did the shopping, especially for the daily food, for the families in hiding. Since others might wonder why she needed so much food, the extra shopping was an extremely dangerous activity; one of the most common ways in which other helpers were discovered by the Nazis.

The Frank family's hiding place was exceptional in several ways. Research about hiding in different countries has hardly been conducted yet hiding in one's own premises (Otto Frank owned the building on Prinsengracht 263, his business location), together with one's complete family, and helped by one's own staff, was obviously not typical in a European context nor for the Netherlands. Most families were split up with the standard hiding place more often a small attic room or a basement, or a shed or haystack in more rural areas.

The deportations in the Netherlands started in July 1942 and continued virtually uninterrupted until September 1944. Compared to surrounding countries, an unusually high percentage of the Jews living in the Netherlands were killed. Of 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands in 1940, 75 to 80 percent, about 105,000, did not survive. An estimated 24,000 Jews found hiding places in the Netherlands. Of these, 16,000 survived and 8,000 were deported. Deportation from the Netherlands meant almost certain death: no more than about 5,000 survivors returned from the concentration camps.[2]

It was not easy to find a hiding place. For a long time the hiding of Jews occurred purely on an individual basis, with the initiative coming mostly from the Jews themselves. In the Netherlands there had been no tradition of resistance or disobedience against authorities. Thus the massive February protest strike in 1941, coming after the first roundup of 400 Jewish men and boys in Amsterdam, was indeed exceptional.

Another exception was the beginning of the so-called NV-group, one of the very few resistance organizations devoted to finding hiding places for Jewish children. The NV, which included some remarkable young men and women, had begun resistance efforts in the summer of 1942.[3] Partly in answer to non-Jewish Dutch men being called up for labor camps, stronger public protest movements and resistance developed from 1943 onward.

In 1944 several hundred thousand non-Jewish Dutch men, both organized and individually, found hiding places throughout the country to avoid being sent to work camps in Germany. By then it was already too late for most Jews. The widespread Dutch administrative helpfulness and public obedience during the first years of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, the effective and well-organized SS-occupation forces, as well as the geographical situation which precluded easy escape, all contributed significantly to the high percentage of Dutch Jews being deported. The Nazi timing of the deportations seems particularly relevant. Especially, the decision in Berlin at the

time to make numerous trains available from the Netherlands for deportation, rather than from other countries, proved fatal to many. The last trains from the Westerbork transit camp left for Auschwitz, Bergen Belsen and Terezin in September, 1944. Among these deportees to Auschwitz were the Frank and Van Pels families and Mr. Pfeffer. The 4th of August—the day their friends were betrayed and arrested—would be a difficult day to get through for Miep and Jan Gies for the rest of their lives.

"Rescuers" in Holocaust history: the hunger for hope and heroes.

The first and the most consistent recognition of the helpers of Jews was organized in Israel by Yad Vashem, the National Memorial to the six million in its department for the Righteous Among the Nations, beginning with the planting of trees in 1962 by the Heroes and Martyrs Remembrance Authority. More than 12,000 rescuers have now received the well-known award.[4]

In the Netherlands, the Israeli Embassy organizes the sober and moving ceremonies with medals awarded in different parts of the country. Despite Yad Vashem's strict criteria, the numbers in the Netherlands continue to be as high as 80 to 100 annually.

As Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, director of the Righteous Among the Nations department at Yad Vashem noted in November, 1994, the figures listing helpers have been "based solely on material made available to Yad Vashem and are in no way to be construed as reflecting the actual number of Jews saved in each country. For instance," he explained, "more Jews were rescued in Belgium than in Holland, yet we have six times as many persons for Holland as we do for Belgium; the same for Italy with relation to Poland. On the other hand, although less Jews were saved in Poland and the Netherlands than in other countries rescue possibilities were more difficult in these two countries than elsewhere in Eastern and Western Europe." Although the underground movements in Denmark and Norway "played a major role in the rescue of the Jews in their communities," Paldiel added, these two organizations have asked that no individual names be divulged.

With increasing public and political awareness of the importance of the Holocaust, the image of the helpers has altered over the past ten years. In the United States, much attention has recently focused on the rescuers. "Rescuers" is becoming the more common term than the—in my view—more appropriate "helpers". Several organizations have committed themselves to locating, honoring and financially supporting these helpers, particularly those from Eastern Europe. Of these organizations the Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers of Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, is the best known. That some people (even though a small proportion of the population) helped the persecuted is regarded by many as a little bit of light in the darkness. The more important the Holocaust remembrance has become, the more there seemed to be a need for good news, for some hope. In 1988 Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis used stronger terms. "The world is hungry for moral heroes. The world needs heroes of flesh and blood: contemporary heroes. The world needs

heroes whose altruism is lived out in action; models of exemplary behavior who release our abstract ideals—human beings to be emulated."[5]

The hunger for more light, hope and heroes is clear, but the reality concerning the helpers seems less so; it is not certain whether we can reasonably expect so much. There are some pitfalls. Many helpers have expressed strong feelings of uneasiness and hesitation toward their new status as award winning, unique individuals—as saints, almost. Helpers honored by Yad Vashem often initially (and sometimes absolutely), refuse to come forward—to stand in the limelight and be called a hero. Some have to be convinced to come forward, even though recognition might be important to them. This uneasiness is understandable. For heroism and sacrifice to be convincing it must be permanently accompanied by modesty. This is the impossible double task of any idol, public hero, or media star—to be special, and yet at the same time to remain a modest and ordinary human being. Expecting anyone to hold this double attitude can be difficult. Thus many helpers tend to refuse the status of hero, and point to their ordinariness.

The helpers seldom speak about the bystanders, but considering their feelings about their own actions in helping we might assume they feel strongly that many others could have done more. They are probably right. This might be a good starting point for those teaching about the Holocaust. Helping was difficult, but not impossible. In the classroom a comparison with ordinary examples of helping behavior (such as the fire brigade or lifesavers on the beach) may be useful, even though we recognize different risks and circumstances. With a little bit of training, courage and awareness of the situation almost anyone, it seems, can do something and make a difference. You do not have to be a super-human being, a moral hero or a saint to be able to help someone.

The search for moral heroes and saints inevitably leads to disappointment. How can the helpers live up to this image of moral heroes attributed to them during the last decade? With all of the praise, honors and publicity, expectations have risen enormously and the helpers have reason to be uncomfortable and afraid that they might disappoint others, that they might not be able to sustain this image. Regarded more and more as a moral example for humanity, it seems that for the rest of their lives they are not allowed to make any mistakes. In my view it is now time to recognize more of the *ordinariness* of the rescuers—something they, themselves, have pointed at, but which usually has been waived aside by others as extreme modesty.

Miep and Jan Gies and the Frank family. Ordinary people in extraordinary times?

Miep and Jan Gies have been confronted with all of these complications. The fact that Anne Frank (one of the eight people Miep and Jan tried to help) has become world famous through her diary was an unforeseen development that changed their lives. In this sense the two are hardly representative as helpers. Yet it has also been suggested by several researchers, such as social psy-

chologist Eva Fogelman[6], that Miep Gies was not exceptional as a helper.

Dr. Fogelman notes: "Reading Miep's account I was struck by how typical she is of the 120 non-Jewish rescuers of varying backgrounds and nationalities I interviewed over the past five years for a social-psychological study of altruistic behavior during the Nazi era."[7] The Gies' have had to cope with many different emotions: loss of their friends, feelings of failure after these people were arrested, the sudden worldwide recognition of Anne Frank. One key to understanding the acts of Miep Gies is the relationship between her and Otto Frank. He was her employer, and she was always aware of the difference in social status between them. In 1933 she came to work for Otto Frank when she was 24 years old. The Frank family had recently arrived in Amsterdam from Germany, soon after the Nazis had assumed power. Among their new friends in Holland were many German Jewish refugees. During the weekend, Miep sometimes visited the family where they would discuss the political situation.

Opening of Anne Frank House, May 3, 1960, from left, Otto Frank, Jan and Miep Gies

Miep: "We listened. We did not say much, of course. In my view these were all much more educated people."[8]

Living in the south of Amsterdam, Miep knew several Jewish families; and her first boyfriend was Jewish. They used to visit the flea market on Waterlooplein on Sundays, a popular pastime before the war.

"He was a Jewish boy, and he wanted to go out with me. And then my stepsister warned me: 'Think about it. Don't start this, because he is a Jewish boy; and in his home they are very orthodox—you won't be allowed in there.' Then I quit the relationship . . . never saw him again. Sometimes I wonder whether he survived? I don't know."

Meanwhile Jan Gies knew several Jewish families, including the family in whose house he

rented a room.

During the first years of the war, Miep and Jan saw the situation for the Jews deteriorate but did not yet see a possibility for themselves to get involved in opposing the Nazis. At the office one of Otto Frank's staff was Jewish, Esther, who was also a secretary, a few years younger than Miep. One of the first actions the Nazis initiated in the Netherlands was to register Jews and non-Jews with the so-called 'Aryan declaration' to be filled in by all civil servants, employers, and schools. Compliance with this measure in the Netherlands was almost 100 percent. Virtually everyone, Jews and non-Jews, filled in this form explaining how many Jewish or non-Jewish parents and grandparents each one had. Such obedient registration gave the Nazis invaluable information which made the separation of Jews from non-Jews much easier. The next step was the forced dismissal of the Jewish staff, which meant that Esther was forced to leave.[9]

Miep: "I remember Esther said good-bye to us. She had to leave because she was Jewish. Dismissed. Yes, that's the way things were. She did not come back, I think. She did not survive the war. She was still there on my wedding day. I have a lot of pictures with her . . . she was the only one in the office who was Jewish."[10]

Miep recalled the farewell. "She said good-bye, and we wished her the best. She gave me a box with a mirror, comb and brush from her and her family. I guess she did not want to keep that at home. She could not keep it anymore. She gave it to me. She stayed in Amsterdam, but could not find work anywhere else . . . . It was all so painful, you see. You heard about her dismissal but did not talk about it further. You did not know what was going to happen. You gave into that. Had to accept it. The Germans were the boss, and you were scared—frightened to death."[11]

Sometimes Miep and Jan Gies worried about what would happen to the Franks. They admired Otto Frank enormously.

Miep: "Yes, you would sometimes wonder and ask yourself, 'What is to be done with Frank?', but you had the feeling he would know a solution. That is the feeling I had. So I did not give it any further thought then."

Jan: "After all he was an ex-service man, [in the] military, and he already had [shown his loyalty to Germany]. He had fought in the First World War for the German army, and we were aware of that. We thought he would be exempted from wearing such a thing [the yellow star]".[12] And so the initiative to go into hiding, to find a hiding place, to organize everything for it, came from Otto Frank. He [had] thought it all out . . . and he had already divided certain different tasks for his staff members when he asked them to help him and his family in hiding.

Miep and Jan Gies waited to be asked. Otto Frank asked Miep: Are you willing to take on

the responsibility of taking care of us while we are in hiding? In a practical sense, this meant doing the shopping for the families, finding the food. Did she realize that when she said yes?

Miep: "The shopping, yes, yes. I did not ask any further. Now you are able to talk freely. At that time you did not ask questions. You would not ask so many things. You just did what was asked from you and nothing more."[13]

To explain this relationship between herself and Otto Frank, Miep explained, "We were the office ladies."

"You would get instructions? You were told what to do?"

"We would get instructions, and we understood very well that that was the way it should be. There was no other way. We did not feel wronged or restricted by that."[14]

Miep Gies did the shopping. Otto Frank, her employer, had asked her to do this, and she would not say "No" to him. It was very normal and typical for her to do what he asked her to do. To have said "No", to refuse what he asked of her, would have been much more extraordinary. She even enjoyed doing all the shopping, and she also saw it as a kind of performance. When you were in a shop, to be successful you needed certain theatrical qualities. It was a bit like playing in the theatre.

"I would go to all the shops, and you would try things out a little with the man in the shop. How far you could go. How much you could ask. [food was rationed and scarce]. To what extent you could show compassion. To what extent you could pretend to be in such a terrible situation. Yes, that was like playing in a theatre. At least, that is how I felt about it."[15]

She was asked to compare the request put to her to do the shopping with requests she would normally get in the course of her work. Was that similar?

Miep: "Yes. That was normal, wasn't it? That was very normal. It was just like it was with your work."[16]

Otto Frank with Miep and Jan Gies, when he was living with them, 1951

It may be that initially the hierarchical relationship between Otto Frank and Miep Gies had changed little, but it definitely changed in the course of the war. The Franks were completely dependent upon their helpers, and Miep was well aware of that. Otto changed, she says.

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"Because of his dependence upon us. In fact he didn't like that. Because after all he was the director, and in normal life whatever he said would happen. But now he depended upon us. Well just imagine the situation. That change. He had to wait to see whether we agreed with everything. Whether we approved. Whether we did everything according to his requests . . . ."[17]

After the liberation, Otto Frank was the only survivor of his family. It is not so well known that he lived with Miep and Jan Gies in Amsterdam for seven years, from 1945 on, even though the two had only a small flat, not much room, and Miep and Jan had a baby. Otto Frank preferred to stay with them, not on his own or with friends who had larger houses. The relation became even more complicated. At home Otto and Miep were now like family members; but in the office Otto was her boss again. At home she called him Otto; but in the office she addressed him as Mr. Frank.[18] For her, despite everything that had happened their relationship seemingly kept the same social distance.

Miep [with a certain pride]: "And I never made a mistake in that. No. That is maybe why I can handle so many different situations with different people. That is how I am. I can do one thing, yet at the same time think differently about it. I can join in, but in my heart I may think very differently about things..."[19]

This reveals an aspect which, in Miep's memory, is essential about helping others: the ability to live in different worlds at the same time, to split oneself up, to know what to say and what not to say. Especially one had to know not to talk too much. To stay silent is a quality both Miep and Jan Gies value very highly. It was their conviction that actions speak louder than words, and that silence could save lives.

Miep: "I am a person who can be silent."[20]

Jan: "I've never spoken about my work [in the underground] . I've never spoken about it."

They could keep a secret. In front of their friends, their families, and also in front of the Franks. Otto Frank never knew, for example, that the Gies had another person hiding in their own house at the time. They had decided not to tell Otto.

Miep: "No, of course not. Otto would never have approved of that. He would . . . I know just what he would have said: 'Miep, if anything happens to you . . . .' You lived in separate worlds. Also toward our friends. They knew nothing about it. That was the rule: Don't tell."[21]

You never really knew who to trust, but Jan says that somehow you knew anyway.

Jan: "We knew, for example, those people on the other side of the street, they are good [could be trusted]. Why? That is hard for us to say. You see things...hear things. You hear people

talking, and this is how you figure out the value of certain individuals. That is not a one-hundred-percent rule but in general it worked for me. I was lucky. You were only in contact with some people... very limited. You had to be very limited in your contacts. Not speak with the whole neighborhood. And then, of course, you needed a bit of luck, as well. [But] I have been damned careful in talking about anything, because you could never be sure. And I have actually never been wrong about a person, after all..."[22]

Helping Jews in hiding was for Miep and Jan Gies a unique and very private choice which they hardly mentioned to anyone else. After the war—other than in groups that had already worked together—helpers or "rescuers" never formed new groups or organized themselves on the basis of having helped Jews in hiding. The helpers have remained very much a loose collection of individuals, before, during and after the war, until this day.

Those who have interviewed helpers often ask them about what motivated them to take such risks. Miep Gies shows some irritation with these questions. Repeatedly, she says there was very little decision-making involved as far as she was concerned.

Miep: "People always talk about the big risks. We found it self-evident, logical [that one should help]. You could do something, and you could help these people. They were powerless. Did not know where to go. Well, all right, so you did that. [helped however you could] That is why I say we are no heroes. We did our human duty, to help people in need. That is all—there is nothing more to it."[23]

Later, Miep added, "That is the difference today, with everything that is always asked. 'Didn't you know this? Did you not know that? Were you aware, and so on? No! That is not how things went. It had to be done, and so it was done."

"Yes, yes. And we look upon it perhaps too much from today's perspective."

Miep: "Yes. Always. That's what you do. It can't be helped."[24]

Yet the question of fear, of risk-taking, of overcoming fear, is a lasting issue and deserves more research. The memory of fear and risk appears to change as time passes. Fear has been the classic justification in retrospect for not-intervening, for remaining passive. For not helping. Those who did not do anything—the non-rescuing majority—seem consciously or unconsciously, as though in a kind of unquestionable justification, to exaggerate their fear in retrospect. Meanwhile, those who overcame their fear, whose helping actions were successful, in retrospect tend to reduce and even completely deny their fear.

In the interviews with Miep Gies it is clear that both types of reasoning about fear can even

exist at the same time and be used by the same person. About the dismissal in 1941 of her Jewish colleague, Esther, Miep says, "The Germans were the boss, and you were frightened to death."[25] But about the risks she took when caring for the Franks, and concerning her fear in that respect, she says: "How . . . afraid . . . I was not . . . scared. That was not a word in our vocabulary: scared. Especially not at first, in the beginning. Yes . . . later, you were worried sometimes. You would think, 'How can this go on?' . . . But the care for these people—and really, the compassion for what these people went through—that was stronger. That won out."[26]

Apparently time changes fear. Memory changes it. And, consciously or unconsciously, memory of fear can be twisted in retrospect. The relationship to fear was an interesting aspect of psychologist André Stein's interviews with Dutch helpers who emigrated to Canada.[27] One of these helpers described her relationship to fear as something one could get used to like a constant companion or a regular guest at one's dinner table.[28]

In the context of the well-known Samuel and Pearl Oliner study, *The Altruistic Personality*[29], Miep Gies was a helper who had to be asked in order to get involved in helping. Importantly, she knew the Franks very well. Knowledge and the feeling of familiarity were an essential part of her motivation. In Carol Gilligan's theories[30] about moral development, Miep Gies was moved by an ethic of care rather than of justice. Her feelings of connectedness with the Frank family constitute a major part of her motivation to try to help them.

How did the family and friends of Miep and Jan Gies react on first hearing what the two had done during the war?

Miep: "My step-parents had had no idea. They were very surprised. They found it terrible that they (the Franks) had been arrested. They said, 'We never noticed anything about you all this time' . . . Jan's family, too. They were surprised, and also terrified about the arrests."

Asked what her friends and family thought about her choice, she explained: "Well, they agreed with it. But there was no discussion about that. You did not speak about that so much. There was so much else to do, you see. Life went on. We were busy, too . . . . But there was no admiration, no beautiful words . . . . That was your choice. Well, the consequences are also for you—everyone had their own worries. One had this worry, the other that. There was no food. That was a problem, too. Maybe they have thought, well, we should have done that, too. But they never said so. [Such things] remained unspoken."[31]

After Anne Frank's diary became a worldwide bestseller, Miep and Jan Gies had to live with a degree of fame. Later, when Miep hesitantly agreed to publish her own memories, she gained additional acclaim. When Otto Frank still lived in Amsterdam, increasingly he received many visitors personally. Later, after moving to Basel, he began sending visitors—who wanted to hear more

about his family's experiences—to Miep and Jan Gies. Miep's correspondence with readers of the diary and of her own book has increased each year. After the war, Otto Frank, his second wife Fritzi Frank-Geiringer, and Miep Gies spent a good part of their time answering letters from all over the world.

For Miep, fame seems a constant worry and a dilemma. She fears people might find her arrogant. Not modest enough. At the same time, her feelings of responsibility—to answer people who want to know more—are very strong. The American writer and journalist Alison Leslie Gold had convinced her to allow the interviews for a book. When the book was published in the Netherlands, Miep was nervous about the reactions.

"You have no idea what I went through when the book was about to come out in the Netherlands, and with the television interview on Dutch television. I lay on my bed crying for nights, just for fear that the whole country would reject me."

Asked what was she so afraid of, she replied: "Must I be number one? Is it necessary for me to be that? This I wondered, and I was so scared . . . Luckily, I was wrong. And later, I was pleased that I wrote it."[32]

The book was very well received, has even been translated into many languages. How have her family and her friends reacted to this?

"I am welcome everywhere. Everyone is very nice to me . . . I am different, apart—I feel that, sometimes. [But] I am afraid that they may think of me, 'Gosh, she is so uppish.'" Yet I am normal. Ordinary. Sometimes it is difficult when someone starts talking to you on the street, just like that—I feel strange. When I'm waiting for a tram, or in a department store . . . When people are genuinely interested, that is alright, but there are also people who suddenly say they are my friend: this irritates me."[33]

Conclusions

"How do we measure up morally to the rescuers?," Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis asks in a recent article.[34] After carefully reading the interviews with Miep and Jan Gies, and with other helpers, the question might also be: How can the helpers, themselves, live up to the image of moral heroes; an image built-up during the last decade? With all the praise, all the honors and publicity, expectations have risen enormously. The helpers have every reason to be afraid. Afraid they may disappoint others. Afraid they may not be able to sustain the image held by others. Regarded more and more as a moral example for humanity, it might seem they are not allowed to make any mistakes for the rest of their lives.

It is time to view the helpers in a more balanced perspective. These few—who provided hiding places for Jews, who sheltered adults or children for a night, or for years, who were prepared to open their doors and, like Miep Gies, changed their daily routines to help others—are, indeed, exceptional human beings. Where non-involvement was the rule, the common reaction, the helpers were indeed special, unique individuals who took a risk in making a crucial choice. Crucial for those they helped. Crucial, often, for the helpers, too. As historian Raul Hilberg observed,: "In the course of the onslaught on European Jewry, some people in the non-Jewish population helped their Jewish neighbors; many more did or obtained something at the expense of the Jews, and countless others watched what had come to pass."[35]

Some stories of helpers are excellent for teaching about the Holocaust, since they illustrate to teachers and pupils that there were choices: different attitudes and actions that could be taken, even in very difficult circumstances.

Care must be taken not to exaggerate the image of the helpers too much. The more ordinary, banal and even objectionable aspects of the lives of these same people should not be erased. However crucial the involvement in helping, it was, after all, just a moment, a short period in the lives of the helpers; it does not tell everything about their lives or personalities. We must allow for the full complexity and the contradictions in the personal stories of helpers. We know, for example, that for some people it was possible to help Jews in hiding while continuing to believe in antisemitic stereotypes. It was also possible to help Jewish children, taking enormous risks and yet, for some, not be able to keep one's hands off of these children[36] and young Jewish women. It has taken the survivors a long time to reveal these more difficult memories of their hiding experiences. [37]

Only very recently, as the hidden children began to meet to share experiences, have more of these negative aspects of the complete dependence and misuse of trust by some helpers emerged.[38] These trying memories have a sobering effect on the romanticized, one-sided image of heroism and sacrifice of the helpers, on the one hand, and, on the other, the lifelong gratitude of the survivors. The heroic image has had a firm grip on Holocaust memory for decades. Yet a fuller picture, however painful and shocking this may sometimes be, is now slowly surfacing. The request to take a more sober look at the histories of hidden Jews and their helpers comes from both sides, and also from their children.

Some helpers of hidden Jews during the Holocaust certainly make good models for moral education. But the need for these role models, the desire for a positive image tends to blur the more complicated areas of these individual histories.

Teachers of Holocaust history should be encouraged to suppress the tendency to generalize, dramatize, simplify or glorify the stories of those who hid and of those who helped them. Recognizing the difficult, different and sometimes contradicting elements in personal histories of

all groups in the Holocaust will raise more questions than easy answers, but it will also result in a truer picture of the record. This more realistic picture offers a different educational perspective, as well, for if these ordinary people could rise to the occasion and act in an exemplary manner when the times called for it, then possibly so could many others.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I want to express my special and heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Miep Gies for her time and for agreeing to be interviewed once more, and for her frank answers to so many difficult questions. Secondly, I wish to thank my colleagues at the Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, for their help and suggestions: Dineke Stam, Karen Peters, Jan Erik Dubbelman, Wouter van der Sluis, Ita Amahorseija, Hans Westra, Marie-Jose Rijnders, Rian Verhoeven and Yt Stoker.

ENDNOTES

[1] For a general and well-documented history of Anne Frank and her family and their experiences, see *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition*, Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation. Amsterdam, 1986 and New York, 1989. For an extensively illustrated biography of Anne Frank, see: Ruud van der Rol and Rian Verhoeven, *Anne Frank: Beyond the Diary. A Photographic Remembrance*. Amsterdam, 1992, New York, 1993. Miep Gies published her own memories as: *Anne Frank Remembered. The Story of Miep Gies, Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family*, by Miep Gies with Alison Leslie Gold. Amsterdam and New York, 1987.

[2] See J.C.H. Blom, *The Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands in a Comparative International Perspective*, in: Dutch Jewish History, Volume II. Jerusalem/Assen/ Maastricht, 1989, pp. 273-290.

[3] For the history of the NV-Group, see Bert Jan Flim, *De NV en haar kinderen* 1942-1945. *Geschiedenis van een Nederlandse onderduikorganisatie gespecialiseerd in hulp aan Joodse kenderen*. Groningen, 1987. Flim is currently finishing his dissertation on the history of the organizations that provided hiding places for Jewish children in the Netherlands.

[4] An analysis of this division of numbers of individuals honored by Yad Vashem over various countries would be interesting. Why did so many Dutch Jews who survived feel the need, or maybe the word is obligation, to request the Yad Vashem honor for those who tried to save them, as compared with other countries? And why so many Polish Jews? Why so few others?

[5] Harold M. Schulweis, *The Bias Against Man. NewLight on Rescue and Rescuers. Dimensions*, Vol. 3, no. 3, p. 8. New York, 1988.

[6] Eva Fogelman, *Rescuers*. Review of Miep Gies and Alison Leslie Gold, *Anne Frank Remembered*, in *Lilith* #18 , pp. 28-29.

[7] Interviews with Miep and Jan Gies, by Wouter van der Sluis, Janrense Boonstra and Marie-Jose Rijnders, Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, 1992. Tape 1, side A.

[8] Tape 1, side B.

[9] With the help of his non-Jewish staff and of Jan Fies, Otto Frank had been active in

transforming his company into several newly established ones with non-Jewish management. These efforts had started already in October, 1940, when the first anti-Jewish decrees came out. It is probable that Otto recognized the situation from what he had seen before in Germany, and reacted quickly to these developments. In October 1940, a new company called *La Synthese* was established in Hilversum where Victor Kugler, one of Otto Frank's staff, lived: he became the director. In May, 1941, the name of this company was changed into Gies & Co. About Esther we know very little. So far, no lists of employees at the time or any other correspondence or documents have been recovered. My suggestion is that in the course of the difficult attempts to save the company by presenting it as a new, non-Jewish firm, the position of Esther had become problematic. Lack of adequate sources prevents us to say anything further about this indeed painful case at the moment.

[10] Interview with Miep Gies, 20 October 1993, by Dienke Hondius and Dineke Stam.

[11] Idem, interview 20 October 1993.

[12] Tape 2, side A.

[13] Tape 2, side A

[14] Tape 2, side A.

[15] Tape 2, side A.

[16] Tape 5, side A.

[17] Tape 2, side A.

[18] In Dutch there are two ways of addressing a person, similar as in French with *tu* or *vous*, and in German with *Du* or *Sie;* the Dutch equivalents are *je* and *U*. Miep would use the respectful "U" when she spoke to Otto Frank.

[19] Tape 2, side B.

[20] Tape 5, side A.

[21] Tape 2, side A.

[22] Tape 3. side A.

[23] Tape 5, side A.

[24] Tape 6, side A.

[25] Interview with Miep Gies, 20 October 1993.

[26] Tape 5, side A.

[27] André Stein, psychologist and child survivor (a hidden child in Hungary) is now at the University of Toronto.

[28] André Stein, *Quiet Heroes: True Stories of the Rescue of Jews by Christians in Nazi-occupied Holland*. New York, 1988.

[29] Oliner, Samuel P. and Pearl, *The Altruistic Press: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*. Free Press, N.Y. 1988.

[30] Gilligan, C., *In a different voice: Psychological Theory on Women's Development*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981.

[31] Interview with Miep Gies, 20 October 1993.

[32] Interview, 20 October 1993.

[33] Interview, 20 October 1993.

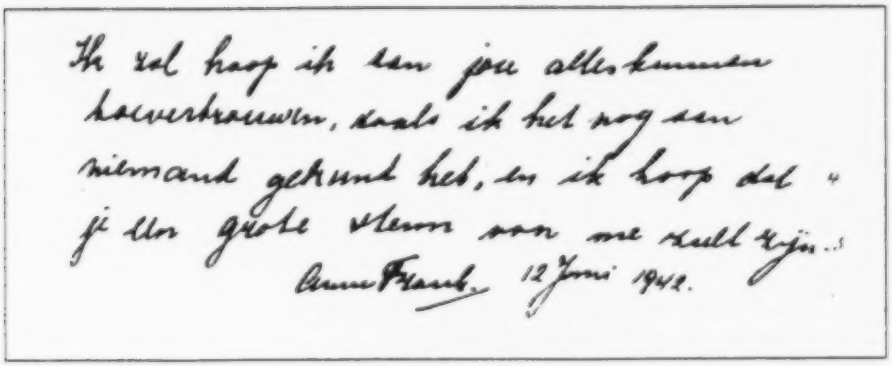
[34] "On My Mind". *Moment*, April, 1988, pp. 56-58.

[35] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders. The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945*. New York, 1992, p. 212.

[36] See Anita van Ommeren and Ageeth Scherphuis, "De onderduikers in de Haarlemmermeer." *Vrij Nederland*, 16 March 1985. Amsterdam, pp. 2-25.

[37] For a series of in-depth interviews with Dutch Jewish women who experienced sexual intimidations in hiding, see Ziporah Valkhoff, "Leven in een niet-bestaan. Beleving en betekenis van de joodse onderduik," and also the introduction to this book by Jolande Withuis, *Zonder naam, zonder ouders, vogelvrij: ondergedoken kinderen en de complexe constellatie van verlating, woede en dankbaarheid*. Icodo, Utrecht, 1992.

[38] An impressive collection of ten portraits of hidden children appeared recently: André Stein, *Hidden Children: Forgotten Survivors of the Holocaust*, Toronto, 1993.


Ik zal hoop ik kan jou alles kunnen
toevertrouwen, zoals ik het nog aan
niemand gedaan heb, en ik hoop dat
je een groote steun van me zult zijn..!
Anne Frank 12 Juni 1942.

On the first page of her diary Anne wrote:
I hope I shall be able to confide in you completely, as I have never been able to do in anyone before, and I hope that you will be a great support and comfort to me
Anne Frank (June 12, 1942)

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

by Judith Tydor Baumel, Ph.D.,
Doctor Baumel, an author of several books, is an historian at the University of Haifa and Israel's Open University

One of the best known works on the Holocaust is *The Diary of Anne Frank,* first published in Holland as *Het Achterhuis (The House Behind)* in 1947, then in the English-language edition in 1952 as *Anne Frank: the Diary of a Young Girl,* and in numerous editions since. It appeared as the play [*The Diary of Anne Frank*] in 1956, and as a film in 1959. The book alone sold millions of copies in more than 30 countries throughout the world, with readers from Iceland to Uruguay and from Mexico to South Korea introduced to the inner world of one of the Holocaust's most famous victims.

Most everyone knows Anne Frank's name but some do not even realize that the story occurs during the Holocaust. The misconception has been enhanced by those seeking to universalize Anne Frank's story, removing its Jewish content and portraying it as a symbol of humanity in a world filled with oppression and terror. However, the *Diary* is first and foremost the story of a Jewish child and, later, a young woman, living in hiding with her family in Holland during the Holocaust. Anne's true identity, and the Holocaust-related framework in which she hid, are the essence of this essay and serve as a focal point of the suggestions which follow.

Apart from its moral and cultural value as a priceless documentation of human vitality during oppression, the *Diary* offers numerous educational opportunities for teaching the Holocaust in both formal and informal educational settings. Teachers attempting to uncover these opportunities must keep two points in mind:

1. Using the *Diary* as an educational tool is more effective when read in the fuller context of Nazi anti-Jewish policy during the Holocaust, and in the context of the Jewish response to the Nazi policy.

2. A prerequisite to using the *Diary* as a vehicle for Holocaust education is the ability to formulate questions which help students make the transition from empathy to information, from feelings to facts, and back, as students learn to more fully comprehend these facts as they identify with what they are reading.

Let us take the *Diary* and begin charting a blueprint by asking some pertinent questions. First, how is Nazi anti-Jewish policy in occupied Holland expressed through the entries written by the young Anne Frank? In what way does her diary chart Jewish response to Nazi policy?

Even before opening the *Diary*, teachers should provide students with brief background material on Anne Frank, her family, and the larger framework of refugees during the Holocaust. Although the diary is set in Holland, it is important to note that the Frank family actually came as refugees from Germany who left for Holland when Hitler came to power in 1933. Anne was four years old, her sister Margot, seven. These facts offer a starting point for a discussion of Hitler's rise to power and of the reaction by Jews and other anti-fascists in Germany: for some, dismay and depression; for others, the strengthening of Jewish spirit and even anti-Nazi activity; for a third group, flight out of Germany; in most cases to neighboring countries, such as Holland.

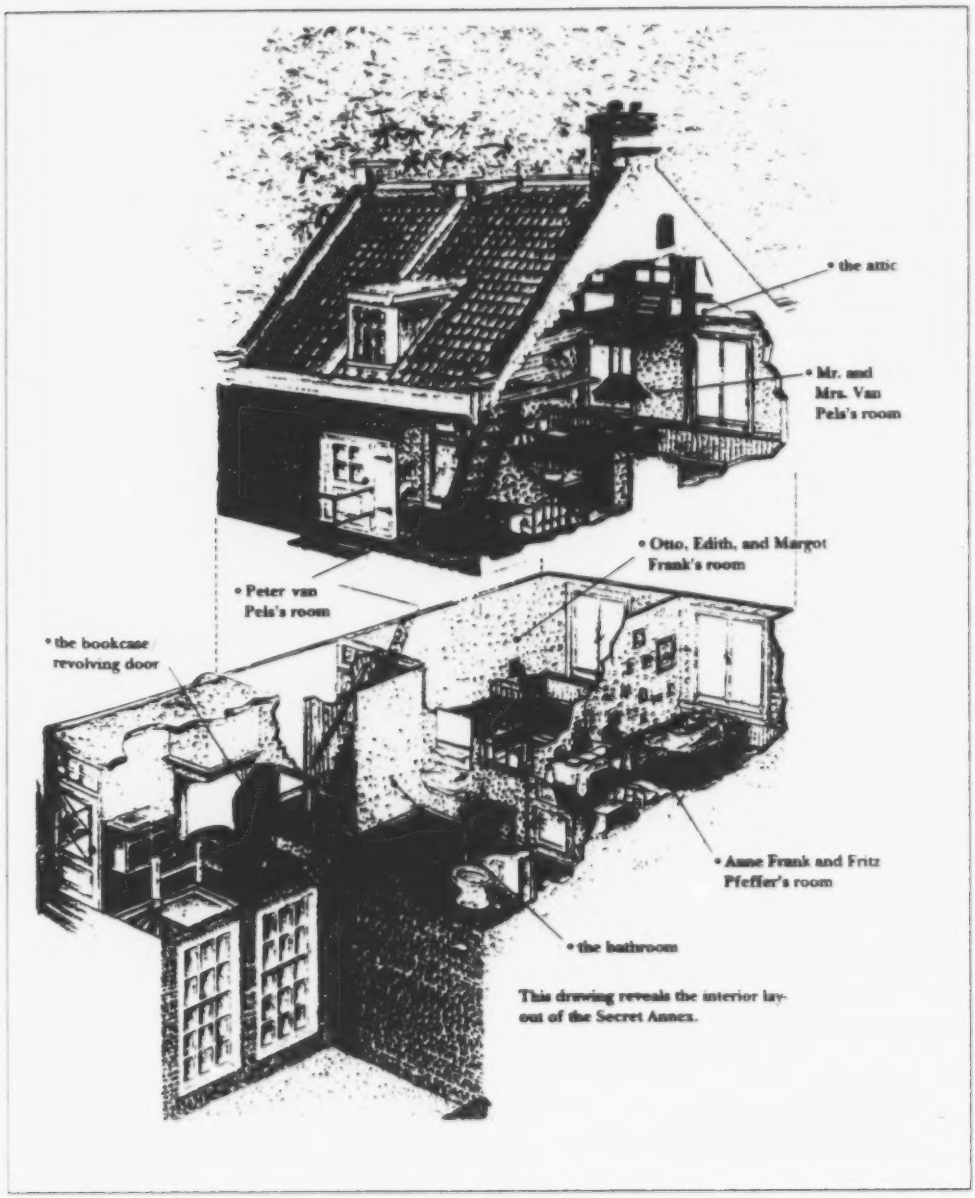
It is also possible to draw a parallel between the Frank's departure from Germany and the actions of families from throughout the world who sought freedom from political and religious oppression by coming to the United States.

A suitable entry to read aloud from the diary about Anne's background is the one on June 20, 1942, in which she described her immediate family, their flight to Holland, and the departure of other family members (uncles and grandmother) from Germany in 1938. The entry, concluding with a precise description of anti-Jewish legislation in Holland, also serves to open discussion of Nazi anti-Jewish policy in Germany and other occupied countries. A sample discussion could begin as follows:

Question: After conquering an enemy population, apart from killing its members outright how can you first break their spirit?

The teacher can then categorize these groups accordingly: 1) isolation; 2) discrimination; 3) economic impoverishment.... The entry might close with students using these groups to categorize anti-Jewish ordinances in Holland.

The next issue for discussion is the major one in the book: the decision made by Anne's family to go into hiding. First mentioned in the diary on July 5th, 1942, Anne describes her surprise over her father's announcement that they would have to get used to being cut off from the world, and to their anxiety over having to make the move very soon. This entry can be used to begin a


• the attic
• Mr. and Mrs. Van Pels's room
• Otto, Edith, and Margot Frank's room
• Peter van Pels's room
• the bookcase revolving door
• Anne Frank and Fritz Pfeffer's room
• the bathroom
This drawing reveals the interior lay-out of the Secret Annex.

The secret hiding place of the Frank family

discussion about the options open to Jews attempting to save their lives during the Holocaust, and the significance of the decision to go into hiding. At some point, the teacher should mention a key point about the decision to go into hiding or to adopt false, non-Jewish identities. More Jews were saved by these two methods than by any other means.

There are several ways to begin a discussion about going into hiding. One, ask what is required to go "underground", as it was called during the war. Answers should include the following: a place to hide, preferably big enough to allow movement. Here you can mention that Anne's family, along with several others, were able to utilize a number of rooms. Others were forced to spend long periods of time in extremely cramped quarters, even in spaces as small as closets. Another requirement was an ongoing supply of food and

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water, toilet facilities, etc. Using such diary entries as July 9, 1942, compare the conditions of the Franks' hiding place with those available to other—usually less fortunate—Jews during the Holocaust:

> "We arrived safely at the office and went straight upstairs, there was first a W.C. [water closet] and then a small bathroom with a new basin, next door to that was a small room with two divans, that was Margot's and my room. It had three built-in cupboards, next door to it was another room, Daddy's and Mummy's, there were two divans there as well and two small tables and a smoker's table, and a small set of bookshelves and another built-in cupboard, there were 150 cans of vegetables and all sorts of other supplies, then we came to a small corridor with another two doors, one went to the passage that led downstairs to Daddy's office. And the other led to our small bathroom, then a very steep staircase led upstairs to the large kitchen-living room for the van Pels family and a little room for Peter and then there was an attic with a loft."

One should emphasize here that several families eventually came to live in the "Secret Annex", as Anne called their hideaway, crowding the living conditions and requiring even more compromise, tolerance, patience and adaptability.

This brings us to the next group of issues—those which revolve around life in the "Secret Annex". At least three points should be emphasized:

1. The difficulties of being in close quarters and under precarious conditions with a number of people, some of whom ended up living together randomly. These problems include lack of privacy, differences of opinion over everyday matters such as what to eat, how to cook and clean, etc.; trivial matters in themselves yet often blown out of proportion by the stressful situation. See, for example, the entry of September 2, 1942: "Mr. and Mrs. V.P. have had a terrific quarrel, I've never seen anything quite like it before." Or September 21, 1942: "Mrs. Van Daan is unbearable. I get nothing but "blow ups" from her for my continuous chatter. She is always pestering us in some way or other. This is the latest: she doesn't want to wash up the pans if there is a fragment left, instead of putting it into a glass dish as we've always done until now, she leaves it in the pan to go bad." If these grow vocal or out of hand, such simple disputes could jeopardize the safety of an entire group of Jews who could be found by the authorities.

2. Dependency upon outside/friendly sources of assistance. Apart from the actual dilemma of staying out of Nazi hands, this was probably the most difficult issue facing Jews in hiding. In Anne's case, the family hid in the attic of Mr. Frank's former firm and was helped by several staff members. These "righteous Gentiles", as non-Jews altruistically called helping Jews during the Holocaust, were the lifeline for food supplies, additional items of clothing, news of the outside world

and general safety. It became particularly difficult when people in hiding found themselves in urgent need of medical care. Here teachers can point to the entry for October 29, 1942: "I am awfully worried, Daddy is ill. He has a high temperature and a red rash, it looks like measles. Think of it; we can't even call the doctor!"

In the case of the Franks, their attitude toward their protectors seemed one of straightforward gratitude. See, for example, Anne's entry for May 26, 1944, regarding the two young women who acted as "go-betweens" for those living in the "Secret Annex":

"They are fetching and carrying more for us, take more interest in our troubles, although we certainly mustn't ever be a nuisance to them. Oh what very good people they really are." Teachers can emphasize that such an attitude was not always the case. In certain situations "protectors" used their position as a lifeline to take advantage, physically or financially, of Jews in hiding.

3. Fear of discovery. This was a concrete fear affecting all Jews in hiding during the Holocaust, since discovery usually meant deportation. On September 30, 1942, Anne describes the fate of Dutch Jews picked up by the Nazis: "Every night people are being picked up without warning and that is awful particularly for old and sick people, they treat them just like slaves in the olden days. The poor old people are taken outside at night and then they have to walk for instance as far as Adama v. Scheltemaplein in a whole procession with children and everything then when they arrive... they are sent to Ferdinant Bolstraat and from there back again to A. v. Scheltemaplein and that's how they plague these poor people. Also they throw water over them if they scream."

Another such other such entry is found on October 9, 1942:

"Our many Jewish friends are being rounded up by the dozen. These people are treated by the Gestapo without a shred of decency, being loaded into cattle trucks and sent to Westerbork, the big Jewish camp in Drente. Westerbork sounds terrible, only 1 washstand for thousands of people 1 W.C. and there is no separate sleeping accommodation. Men, women and children all sleep together... If it is as bad as this in Holland, whatever will it be like in the distant and barbarous regions they are being sent to? We assume that most of them are murdered. The English radio speaks of their being gassed; perhaps that is the quickest way to die."

This entry leads to another point of discussion. What was known in both occupied Europe and the free world—Have students list the countries on either side—regarding the fate of European Jews? As we see, as early as October, 1942, the B.B.C. was broadcasting news of the gas chambers back to occupied Europe. However, even having heard the news, how many people could believe it? Treated it seriously? How could they fathom that the tens of thousands of people who were being deported "to the East", were actually being gassed to death?

Two points here deserve mention. The first, what Holocaust historians have termed "sanctification of life", is the attempt by Jews during the Holocaust to stay alive in the face of daily degradation and danger while remaining steadfastly moral. Descriptions of daily life in the "secret Annex" offer an excellent example of an attempt to "sanctify life" during the Holocaust by trying to keep on with "business as usual": studies, writing, household duties, etc., under conditions which should have encouraged lethargy, dependence, even utter helplessness. The vigor with which Anne's family and others in the "Annex" clung to routine, seems vivid proof of the importance placed on daily life.

Another important entry in Anne's diary is the one which was never written—the story of her capture, deportation, incarceration in Bergen Belsen and eventual death scant weeks before the camp's liberation. Anne Frank's story is a "triumph of the human spirit", and the actions of those who hid her a "testimony to human goodness", especially considering the risks involved.

As for the rescuers of Jews in hiding, their fate differed in each case but there was no doubt about the perils involved. Some were sent to prison, others to a concentration camp, while a third group could be sent to an extermination camp. This emphasizes again how serious an offense it was in Nazi eyes to hide Jews. In the case of Anne Frank, many of her rescuers were sent to prison but lived to tell the tale after their release. It is from them that we have a description of Anne's life in hiding from the perspective of one who was not with her in the "Secret Annex."

While a number of people risked their well-being to aid Anne Frank and the others with her, someone who knew about their life in hiding informed the Nazis about them. Among older students, this can lead to a discussions about treason, collaboration with the enemy, and moral principles as behavioral guidelines, both in the framework of the Holocaust and in other situations of war and stress.

Dealing with the *Diary of Anne Frank* as a historical document, one often loses track of the human side of the events. For example, crisis of adolescence and middle age. Another pitfall comes from focusing solely upon Anne and her relationship with other members of the "Secret Annex". From only this point of view, the student fails to consider these characters as more than objects for Anne to describe. Thus, for example, Anne's sister Margot is largely ignored, although Margot's story must have been equally fascinating. Indeed, Margot's being called up for forced labor was the immediate impetus for the family to go into hiding. Similarly, the relationship between the two older members of the Frank family, as parents and partners in marriage, usually is left out of the picture. Yet a fuller description of life in hiding during the Holocaust would mention the various relationships in the "Secret Annex", not limit itself to a description of the war-torn world as seen from the hidden bubble in which its youngest member, Anne, spent the last two years of her life.

EXAMINING OPTIMISM: ANNE FRANK'S PLACE IN POSTWAR CULTURE

by Alex Sagan,
A Doctoral Candidate in the Department of History,
Harvard University, his dissertation examines
the cultural significance of Anne Frank

"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

Anne Frank's name has been linked, above all, to this phrase from her diary, which occurs near the end of her entry for Saturday, July 15, 1944. Indeed, these words are often cited as the essence of Anne Frank's writings and experiences—offered as an assertion of undaunted optimism in the face of great hardship.

This essay asks if the famous phrase really gives an accurate sense of Anne Frank's diary? Considering the larger context for these famous words, it becomes clear that undue emphasis here involves a distortion of Anne Frank's thoughts and experience.

This leads us to ask, how did these words come to be accepted as the essence of Anne Frank's experience? The second part of this essay answers the question by analyzing the Broadway play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and by examining audience reactions in the United States, the Netherlands, and Germany. The play was a reminder of terrible events, but it was successful because, through its optimistic images, it offered diverse audiences deep reassurance and an affirmation of their own goodness.

The Diary Entry

The words are Anne Frank's own: ". . . in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart." This seems a fine translation of the original Dutch phrase. The German translation of Anne's quote is also fine. The problem lies in singling out this phrase and offering it as Anne Frank's philosophy, or epitaph. Does this optimistic phrase accurately reflect Anne Frank's thoughts? Let us consider the context in which her words appear.

On Saturday the 15th of July, 1944, Anne Frank composed a long entry in her diary. After

two years of steady writing and regular self-criticism, she had learned to write thoughtful and serious diary entries in her own distinctive voice. Her point of departure on this day was a book the Franks' helpers had brought from the library, *What Do You Think of the Modern Young Girl?* Anne took issue with the book's criticisms of young people, criticisms she felt were directed at her personally. Her discussion turned quickly from the book in question to her view of herself and of her relationships with others, especially with her father and young Peter. Toward the end of the entry, Anne focuses on the difficulty of being young, which she finds more trying than being older. She draws particular attention to the difficulty of developing and maintaining one's ideals in a world which seems to undermine all idealism. At this point, Anne's discussion moves beyond the themes of intergenerational conflict and personal development, and contemplates the existential dilemmas posed by her historical situation:

> That's the difficulty in these times: ideals, dreams, and cherished hopes rise within us, only to meet the horrible truth and be shattered.
>
> It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world being turned into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquillity will return again.
>
> In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out.
>
> Yours, Anne

This is one of the most moving passages in the diary. It is no surprise that it makes a strong impression on readers, or even that they draw from it a general impression of Anne Frank's life. Perhaps she did cling to optimistic ideals in the face of terrible cruelty and suffering, and such idealism is, of course, inspirational. Yet the passage is notable not so much for its optimism as for its overwhelming mood of desolation.

Anne's tone reflects her recognition of the extent of human destructiveness and malice. This "horrible truth" shatters all of one's ideals. She may still hope, but hope is not the same as optimism. Around her, Anne Frank saw a world of "confusion, misery, and death". She even appears to have a

premonition of her own death, describing with the powerful metaphor of "ever approaching thunder" the ominous threat. In this context, is it really accurate to summarize Anne Frank's world view with the words: "I still believe that people are really good at heart"? Considering the larger context, clearly her optimistic thoughts express a hope rather than a certainty. Indeed, as she, herself, presents it, the times in which she lived plainly contradict such optimism.

Thus Anne Frank's optimism was, in actuality, profoundly chastened by the hostility and violence which threatened her. With this in mind, we see that Anne Frank's most famous words assume a more complex and less Pollyanish meaning. As the complete quote makes clear, her expression of faith in human goodness was not written as a triumphant pronouncement of optimism. It was written as an expression of hope—desperate hope—despite all that the young author had witnessed and experienced; and that was before her arrest, before she was in Westerbork, in Auschwitz, and in Bergen-Belsen, where she died.

If we further broaden the context for interpreting Anne Frank's story, an optimistic point of view becomes even harder to justify. When Anne Frank wrote her diary, she had yet to experience the full horror of Nazi Germany's program to murder all Jews. We know, however, what happened to Anne Frank after July 1944, just as we know what happened to all of the victims of the Nazi's genocidal policies. Against this background, evoking Anne Frank's optimism seems rather naive.

This naiveté is called to question by two individuals who had intimate knowledge of Anne Frank and her suffering: Miep Gies, who helped hide the Franks, and Hannah Pick-Goslar, Anne's childhood neighbor and friend who last encountered Anne across a fence in Bergen-Belsen. In recent interviews, both women especially criticized the way Anne Frank's optimistic utterance is frequently offered as the very moral of her story.

Miep Gies (named Miep van Santen in the published diary) says bluntly: "I never agreed with this, though I never told Mr. Frank [for fear of hurting his feelings]"[1] The Austrian-born Mrs. Gies, who lives in Amsterdam, explains: "I am not an optimist". Moreover, Mrs. Gies contradicts the notion that a rejection of optimism encourages passivity or resignation. Through public speaking, especially at German schools, she does what she can to prevent a recurrence of past horrors. Thus, in *Anne Frank Remembered*[2] she vividly described her wartime experiences—focusing not merely on hope for the future but on some of the ugly realities of past history.

As with Mrs. Gies, Hannah Pick-Goslar (called Lies Gossens in the published diary) speaks regularly about the Nazi persecution of the Jews, and about her friendship with Anne. And here we meet a less naive Anne Frank. While in hiding, Anne Frank learned that many of her friends had been arrested and deported by the Nazis. Anne was even gripped with nightmare images over the fate of her friends. Feeling pangs of what we might now call "survivor's guilt", Anne asked herself why was it that her friends should be taken away, perhaps to die, while she should remain safely

hidden. Mrs. Pick-Goslar, who lives in Jerusalem, noted the irony that *she* managed to survive while Anne Frank did not. As with Mrs. Gies, Mrs. Pick-Goslar also rejects the attempt to summarize Anne Frank's life with an optimistic epitaph. Describing the moment when she and Anne were reunited across a fence in Bergen-Belsen, Mrs. Pick-Goslar suggests that the Anne Frank she encountered no longer showed her earlier optimism.[3]

Although Anne Frank may have clung to her ideals while still in hiding, it may be mistaken for others to turn her private hopes—however inspiring—into a public declaration or an epitaph. Yet dominant cultural trends did just this in the years after World War II, especially during the 1950s and 1960s. How and why did this occur?

The Americanization of Anne Frank

Anne Frank's diary was published in Dutch in 1947, in German and French in 1950, and in English in 1952. Publishers initially rejected the diary, claiming that people wanted to put the war behind them and would not read such a book. About Anne Frank's writings, at least, they are wrong. The Dutch, French and English-language editions all received exceptionally positive reviews. Sales were good, except in Germany. Translations into other languages were planned. Anne Frank was becoming well-known, but her public image had not yet come into sharp focus. It was the tremendous success of the American play which led to the saintly image of Anne's youthful spirit who could still "believe that people are really good at heart."

An American writer, Meyer Levin, was the first to dramatize the diary. Although Levin's script was never produced, he was perhaps the first to single out the now famous passage for special emphasis, prominently placing it at his play's climactic finish.[4] Even though Levin included references to "the suffering of millions" and to "the approaching thunder", his script used Anne's words of optimism and faith in order to leave the audience with a decidedly uplifting ending.

The dramatic emphasis was virtually codified by Frances Goodrich Hackett and Albert Hackett, who were chosen to write the authorized stage play after Otto Frank and Broadway producer Kermit Bloomgarden decided not to employ Levin as the playwright. Was Levin's version plagiarized? This was the claim of Levin's lawyer, who argued in the New York State Supreme Court that the similarities between the two plays could not be accidental. If the Hacketts had not read Levin's play, then perhaps Bloomgarden, with whom the Hacketts consulted through eight drafts, was responsible. The jury sided with Levin but the judge set aside the verdict, pointing out that both plays were based on the same original diary and thus similarities could easily arise.[5]

In any case, Frances Goodrich Hackett and Albert Hackett went beyond Levin in stressing the notion that "people are really good at heart". The writers invoked this line twice in the final act: once during an important exchange with Peter (Act II, scene IV), and again at the close of the play.[6]

They repeated this uplifting approach in their screenplay for the Hollywood feature film, *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The effect of the Hackett's formulation is difficult to overstate, since their play and film multiplied Anne Frank's fame immeasurably at the same time that it linked her decisively to platitudes about human goodness.

Such rosy optimism, typical of American popular culture during the 1950s, resonated with rising belief in the inevitability of progress, the virtue of tolerance, and the value of freedom. Consider this letter to producer Kermit Bloomgarden:

> Dear Sir:
>
> The students of Jackson Junior High School understands [sic] that you were the one that made it possible for us to see "The Diary of Anne Frank" at the reduced admission rate.
>
> The play was woderfully [sic] produced and the actors [,] too, were wonderful. It gave us all the feeling of how lucky we are to live in America, the land of the free.
>
> Thank you.
>
> Sincerely yours,
>
> Peggy Urban
> Homeroom 304[7]

Anne Frank's story would remind students that events in other lands could be frightful, but the Hacketts' stage play provided only an obscured view of the grimness of such events, quickly soothing anxieties by reinforcing a decidedly American type of idealism. From this perspective, the "moral" of the Second World War was that good triumphs over evil. In Anne's belief in goodness, Americans heard an affirmation of their own self-image as a freedom-loving people who had restored peace in Europe: "It gave us all the feeling of how lucky we are to live in America, the land of the free."

For European Jewry, wartime suffering suggested grimmer conclusions, but many Americans regarded Jewry's misfortunes from a geographical and psychological distance. Surely, Americans thought, what had been done to the Jews was wrong, but this could only strengthen our faith in self-consciously "American" values, especially optimism. The exceptional horror of the Holocaust was not stressed, and the murder of the Jews was usually submerged in general categories such as "man's inhumanity to man" and "the sufferings of war". This was the approach of Eleanor Roosevelt's introduction to the American edition of Anne Frank's *Diary*. Mrs. Roosevelt—who omitted the fact

that Anne Frank was victimized because she was Jewish—described the *Diary* as "one of the wisest and most moving commentaries on war and its impact on human beings. . . ." Although the book was written by "a young girl living under extraordinary conditions", FDR's widow concluded that the *Diary* "tells us much about ourselves".[8] In much the same way, American audience members found that the play affirmed their own self image and values.

The Hacketts' "Americanization" of Anne Frank's story was, quite simply, a critical and popular success. *The Diary of Anne Frank* opened on Broadway, October 5, 1955. It received rave reviews and played to full houses. *Diary*, which received the Pulitzer Prize and other accolades, ran for 717 New York performances. A "national tour" of major North American cities followed.[9] A "bus tour" visited smaller cities. Stock and amateur rights were soon negotiated and productions of the play continued to multiply. In New York City alone, the play was seen by roughly one million people.

Anne Frank Returns to Europe

It is ironic that the Hacketts' interpretation of Anne Frank, which so deeply reflected the American atmosphere, helped condition Europeans' perceptions of their own recent history. The American stage play enjoyed great success in Europe, and with this success the Hacketts' image of Anne Frank achieved wide acceptance on both sides of the Atlantic.

This did not occur because the play elicited identical reactions from Americans and Europeans. Quite the contrary. The Hacketts' interpretation of Anne Frank's diary achieved wide acceptance because it fit well with different reactions from varied European audiences. Each audience responded to the play in ways that directly reflected that nation's wartime history and each country's postwar struggle to understand its recent past. If we consider the Dutch and German cases, we can see how the qualities of the Hacketts' play could dovetail with the national-historical background of distinct European audiences.

In the Netherlands: Images of Resistance

Following the Dutch opening on November 27, 1956, the playwrights' agent relayed a cable to all concerned with the production: "REVIEWS DIARY FANTASTIC HURRAH."[10] Why did the Dutch respond so favorably? They had, in fact, been expected to find fault with an American presentation of their own history.[11] Dutch, like Americans, responded so well to the play because it supported a cherished image of themselves. Although the play recalled a painful time, it also invoked images of Dutch resistance to Nazism. In Anne Frank's belief in human goodness, the Dutch could hear a reference to Dutch heroism.

Among those who attended the premiere as honored guests were the Dutch queen and

Miep Gies, who had helped to hide the Franks. Mrs. Gies' attendance, reported in Dutch newspapers, was deeply symbolic, reinforcing the widespread and reassuring image of Dutch resistance to Nazism.

On stage, Dutch conduct was represented by the noble characters known as "Miep" and "Kraler". One could hardly find more reassuring portraits: brave, decent, capable, and true to the end. Such heroic icons of Dutch resistance could stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the *Dokwerker* ("dock worker"), a powerful figure in postwar Dutch memory. The statue of the dock worker, unveiled in Amsterdam in 1952, recalls a strike led by Amsterdam workers to protest the round up and deportation of 400 Dutch Jews in February 1941. Every February 25th, a commemoration at the statue honors Dutch resistance to Nazi antisemitism.

The Hacketts' play reinforced this image of Dutch uprightness. It recalled a painful time when 75 percent of Dutch Jews were killed, but it did so in a manner that skipped over difficult questions of Dutch collaboration with, or indifference to, Nazi persecution of Jews. In the play, when the police come to arrest the Franks and their companions they scream in German. In reality, however, only the leader of the arresting policemen was a German speaker. The others were Dutch collaborators. The Hacketts presented a simplified and somewhat deceptive scenario, erasing most any trace of Dutch collaboration.

The playwrights' approach was reassuring and reinforced the optimistic tone of the play. Indeed, the image of noble Dutch resistance supported the claim that "people are really good at heart." In this way, the Hacketts' tendency to present history in an optimistic and simplified fashion presented Dutch audiences with relatively manageable images of their past.[12]

In Germany: Avoidance and Forgiveness

There was great resistance in German postwar society to honest discussion of the Nazi past. Allied attempts to educate Germans about Nazi crimes were regarded with skepticism. Many Germans viewed the Nuremberg Trials as "victors' justice" and resisted the lessons of those tribunals. As far as the murder of European Jewry was concerned, a sort of cultural taboo prevailed. Public references to the Holocaust, such as those of President Theodor Heuss, were rare. This was the situation not only in political life but also in the arts. A play such as Albert Goes' *The Burnt Offering* (1954) was truly exceptional and appealed only to a limited audience.

In this atmosphere, the Hacketts' play achieved something unprecedented. It broke through, as never before, the German resistance to portrayals of Jewish suffering during the Nazi period.

On October 1, 1956, *The Diary of Anne Frank* opened simultaneously in eight German-speaking cities: West Berlin, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Constance, Vienna and Zurich.

Diary played in 95 theaters in the next thirteen months, with total performances exceeding 2,200. The play's German producer wrote that these "performances have influenced a whole generation of Germans. I think one can say, without exaggeration, that no play of our lifetime has had such a deep and lasting efficacy".[13]

German audiences responded to the final curtain in a unique way: stunned silence. Numerous journalists were struck by this unusual behavior. Audiences sometimes remained in their seats, speechless, for some time. Eventually they would file out silently, as if leaving a funeral. Other times, the audience would slowly begin to applaud, rising to their feet for a standing ovation of exceptional duration.

There were other indicators of the play's impact. In March 1957, less than six months after opening night, two thousand young Germans traveled from Hamburg to Bergen-Belsen to pay tribute to Anne Frank's memory. Israeli youth were invited to the ceremony. The ritual was repeated in subsequent years.

Sales of the *Diary* also testify to the effect of the play. Even before the stage play, Anne Frank's *Diary* had been very well known in the Netherlands and the United States. In Germany, however, the *Diary* had been largely ignored in the early 1950s. With the success of the play, sales of the diary grew immensely.

In short, the Hacketts' play, combined with their later screenplay (1958), had a tremendous impact in Germany. How was this achieved, since postwar German society avoided confronting the Holocaust? A play or film that treated the Holocaust could only reach a large German public that was somehow adaptable to the prevailing cultural mood. The Hacketts' play was uniquely suited to the task. Even as the play forced Germans to think about the Holocaust, it did so in a way that lessened German discomfort over the subject.

To begin with, portraying German criminality was held to an absolute minimum. Even at the moment in the play when those in hiding are arrested, no Nazis or Germans appear on stage.[14] Nor did the play highlight Anne Frank's own eloquent remarks about German antisemitism and Nazi brutality. The play's director in Munich sought to remedy this by emphasizing that the story's unseen aggressors were Germans. His method was to play recordings of German beer hall songs at certain moments, perhaps to indicate that singing Germans prowled the streets of wartime Amsterdam. The Hacketts' agent put a quick stop to this "enhancement".

The play also avoided depictions of Jewish suffering. We do not actually see the Franks' arrest. Their fate after they are arrested is not shown, and is only briefly described by Otto Frank's character, who has returned to Amsterdam after the war. The ordeal of life and death in concentration camps is, moreover, subtly minimized by the play's dubious climax. Anne's hopeful words are

repeated as if nothing had changed between the moment Anne Frank actually expressed her hopes and the posthumous moment in which they are reasserted.

These characteristics help explain why Germans were willing to see the play. Still, even with such concessions to German sensitivity, viewing *The Diary of Anne Frank* was not easy for German audiences. As members of the society which, only a few years earlier, was responsible for Anne Frank's death, many Germans felt that evidence of their guilt was being presented on stage. If audience members did not arrive at the theater with this in mind, some theater companies pointed it out. Theater programs included articles entitled, *Are We Guilty* and *How Did Anne Frank Die?* One German described the state of mind: "No one accuses us. We accuse ourselves".

The psychological discomfort of this situation was relieved by Anne's famous words, which could be deeply reassuring: Germans need not think the worst of themselves, for "people are really good at heart." The contemplation of German genocidal crimes was avoided and platitudes were offered instead. The Hacketts' formulation seemed to grant forgiveness for German crimes by affirming the inner goodness of all.

Anne Frank's words appeared to offer forgiveness for past sins and German audiences could now breathe easier, since the most famous of Holocaust victims seemed to acknowledge their "inner goodness".[15] If Germans "accused themselves", Anne Frank seemed to forgive them.[16] In her famous words, Germans could find such reassurances even greater than that bestowed on Dutch and American audiences.

This helps explain the tremendous power Anne Frank's famous line held for Germans. The Hacketts' stress on these words reflected back onto the diary itself. New printings of this newly-discovered best-seller were emblazoned on the cover with the words ". . . ich glaube an das Gute im Menschen."[17] ["I believe in the goodness of people"].

Conclusion

The theatrical adaptation of Anne Frank's story, and the Hollywood film based upon it, served greatly to spread her fame. This accomplishment depended on the unique way that the needs of varied audiences were met. Although Americans, Dutch, and Germans viewed the story from different points of view, all found confirmation of their preferred self-image. The Hacketts' reworking of Anne Frank's optimistic words allowed different audiences to share a feeling of profound reassurance. As we have seen, this comforting effect was achieved by presenting a naive and un-historical picture of Anne Frank's thoughts and sufferings.

Did the popular success of the play require distortion of Anne Frank's original words? Would audiences in the late fifties and early sixties have embraced a more honest and sobering play? In

retrospect, we can see that the popularization of Anne Frank was part of a long-term development toward a more serious contemplation of the Holocaust. The Hacketts' play came at a rather early moment in this evolution. The important books of Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi were still ignored. Most people were unwilling to look, even briefly, into the abyss of the Holocaust. Only with the passing years would this tendency, to obscure the full gravity of the "Final Solution", be replaced by more complex and more honest images of the Holocaust.

The recent acclaim for the film *Schindler's List* recalls the triumph of the stage play based on Anne Frank's diary. Compared with the Hacketts' play, Steven Spielberg's film brings the Holocaust into clear focus. The murder of European Jews emerges as a distinct feature of Nazi policy. Bystanders and murderers are portrayed. Brutal, irrational violence is shown. The blood of innocent victims is spilled. *Schindler's List*, in these and other respects, indicates how far our ability to confront the Holocaust has come since the 1950s. At the same time, however, the film reminds us that we still seek optimistic messages even in the darkest places. By focusing on Jews who survived the Holocaust and on the German who saved them, *Schindler's List* finds more than a glimmer of hope in a sea of death and desolation. Despite everything, we still want to believe that "people are really good at heart".

ENDNOTES

[1] Interview with the author, Amsterdam, November 7, 1994.

[2] Miep Gies with Alison Leslie Gold, Anne *Frank Remembered: The Story of Miep Gies Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family* (New York, 1987)

[3] Interview with the author, Jerusalem, January 3, 1995. Also see: Ernst Schnabel, *Anne Frank: A Portrait in Courage*, trans. Richard & Clara Winston (New York, 1958); Willy Lindwer, The Last *Seven Months of Anne* Frank, trans. Alison Meersschaert (New York, 1991).

[4] *Anne Frank: A Play by Meyer Levin, Adapted from The Diary of Anne Frank* (Privately Published by the Author for Literary Discussion, n.p., 1967?), p. 85.

[5] Meyer Levin, *The Obsession* (New York, 1973).

[6] Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (New York, 1956), pages 168 and 174.

[7] Letter of October 17, 1957. Bloomgarden Papers.

[8] Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, forward by Eleanor Roosevelt, trans. B.M. Mooyaart. Doubleday (Garden City, New York, 1952)

[9] The tour covered, in the course of one year, the following cities (in chronological order): Hollywood, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Denver, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Hershey, Rochester, Toronto, Montreal, New Haven, Boston, Hartford, Wilmington, Washington.

[10] Bloomgarden Papers.

[11] Otto Frank was particularly worried about this, as his letters to the playwrights and producer indicate. Care was taken to eliminate sloppy depictions of the Dutch environment..

The Hacketts consulted Dutch historian Louis de Jong.

[12] Over time, Jews were accorded a growing place in Dutch historical memory. Anne Frank was among the first of the Jewish victims to receive a place in this "master-narrative" of the war period. This process, boosted by the Hacketts' play, also aided efforts to preserve the hiding place at Prinsengracht 263 as a museum. Interview, Louis de Jong, October 15, 1994.

[13] Letter from Gottfried Bermann Fischer to Leah Salisbury, November 8, 1957.

[14] I refer here to non-Jewish Germans. The Franks and their companions were refugees from Germany. This fact might have moved German audiences, but it received no emphasis on stage.

[15] See Judith Doneson, "The American History of Anne Frank's Diary", *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 2, 1, p. 156.

[16] Frank Stern suggests a related view that the play relieved feelings of guilt through a kind of bogus expiation. Simply by finding Anne's character appealing (and who could not?) Germans could engage in a seeming act of repentance for antisemitism. Again, this response avoided serious contemplation of Germany's recent past. At the same time, sympathy for Anne Frank might become identification; this could reinforce the view that Germans, rather than being responsible for the war and the Holocaust, were themselves victims of history. See Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of The Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*. (New York, 1992).

Anne at the Montessori school in 1941, her last year in grade school

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DUTCH JEWRY: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The resettlement of the Jews in the Netherlands (beginning in the late fifteenth century) inaugurated a new chapter in modern European history. During the era of the Black Death (1350s), Jews had been persecuted and driven out of Western Europe, including the Netherlands. Although Jews may have lived in parts of the Northern Dutch provinces at various times, their residence became legal only in the early seventeenth century. With the arrival of a substantial number of Marranos (Jews who had converted to Christianity to save their lives, but who secretly practiced Jewish rituals) from Portugal, who openly returned to Judaism, Holland played a leading role in the resettlement of Jews in Western Europe. The readmission of Jews coincided with Holland's independence from Spain and its transition into a modern seagoing commercial power. Jews were active in the expanding Dutch economy and trade in the East and West Indies. In the mid-seventeenth century, Jews from Holland were readmitted to England and formed the first Jewish community in North America.

Dutch Jewry consisted of three main groups, according to country of origin: Sephardim (from Spain), whose community was established in Amsterdam from the 1550s; German Jewish refugees from the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648); and Polish Jews escaping from the pogroms of 1648 and the instability that followed in Eastern Europe. In 1673, the Polish and German Jews united into one Ashkenazic community. As the Jewish community was granted an extensive measure of self-government, a long-lasting pattern emerged, namely, of a strong Jewish community ruled by a circle of wealthy and paternalistic lay trustees.

The lives of the Jews in the Netherlands were generally differentiated by their origins. In the seventeenth century, the Sephardim formed the elite of the community. When the Dutch economy underwent a period of prolonged decline during the eighteenth century, the Jews suffered both socially and economically. Many professions were closed to them, and they were pushed out of the developing silk and sugar refining industries which they had pioneered. Fear of Jewish competition even led to their exclusion from certain towns.

Gradually, Jews were relegated to the sidelines of Dutch economic life. The eighteenth century saw the first Jewish beggars throughout Holland. By 1795 more than two thirds of the Jews received assistance from the community. Jewish charitable institutions could not help all those in need. Unlike their Eastern European brethren, Dutch Jews did not undergo the cultural and intellectual ferment of Hasidism (A mystical movement which sought direct communication with God through joyous worship). The Enlightenment (Haskalah), however, found sympathy among some of the more learned members of the community.

With the French Revolutionary Wars (from 1789) and the occupation of Holland, the French ideals of enlightenment and modernity led to new laws. In return for equal citizenship, Jews had to relinquish much of their ethnic and religious autonomy. In the Netherlands, there was considerable Jewish opposition to this legislation. Its introduction, on September 2, 1796, was strongly opposed by the non-Jewish population as well, and was enacted only because of the French ambassador's direct intervention. According to Dr. Jozeph Michman, despite such legislation, discrimination against Jews continued on financial, economic, political, and ideological grounds.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Jews not only lived in Amsterdam, but also in the countryside, where they practiced traditional Jewish occupations such as peddling. They were also active in the livestock trade. In Amsterdam, large numbers of the poor formed a marginally employed labor class. In September, 1903, Arthur Ruppin, a sociologist and leading Zionist, observed that Jewish values were losing their attraction for the Amsterdam masses:

> Hundreds and hundreds of children crowd the narrow ways, and some of the streets, like the Rapenburgerstraat and the Valkenburgerstraat, are literally black with children on nice afternoons. There is no evidence of the declining Jewish birth rate which has been noticeable in other Western countries . . . There is a decline in the devotion to Judaism and in the observance of Jewish ritual laws . . . Marriages between Jews and Christians, while once completely unknown, though still not common today, are also no longer rare.

Certain processes were taking place which would affect the development of modern Dutch Jewry. The solid mainline Jewish community under the leadership of Rabbi Joseph Hirsch Duenner (1833-1911), who served as Director of the Jewish Seminary since 1862, lost its relevance for large numbers of the lower classes. Those who could advance—particularly the diamond cutters who comprised the aristocracy of the Jewish laborers—were attracted by Socialism and the trade union movement. Zionism appealed mainly to the middle class. Reform (Liberal) Judaism did not come to Holland until the 1930s with the influx of German Jewish refugees.

Despite progressive ideas and legislation, for all intents and purposes Jews were considered "een Joodsche natie," an alien religious-ethnic minority before whom many doors and opportunities

remained tightly shut, even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When, in 1940, under Nazi occupation, Jews were dismissed from government posts, they were already underrepresented in such positions, according to their numbers in the general population. Although Jews were well represented in the academic world—in 1859, despite harsh opposition, the first Dutch Jew was given professorial rank—there were hardly any Jews among high governmental officials or in the departments of Foreign Affairs and Defense. Under the system of Protestant supremacy which prevailed before the war, Jews did not belong to the dominant church, and minority opportunities were severely limited. Compared to other European countries (including Germany), the Jews found little success in achieving high public office.

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Photograph taken March 10, 1933, Anne, Margot and their mother

May 1935

December 1935

December 1939

Photos of Anne Frank that she used to decorate her diary

December 1940

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Chronology Of The Frank Family And The Families In The Secret Annex*

May 12, 1889: Otto Frank is born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

January 16, 1900: Edith Holländer is born in Aachen, Germany.

May 12, 1925: Otto Frank and Edith Holländer are married.

February 16, 1926: Margot Frank is born in Frankfurt am Main.

Autumn 1927: The Frank family moves to their new home at number 307 Marbachweg.

June 12, 1929: Anne Frank is born in Frankfurt am Main.

March 1931: The Frank family moves to number 24 Ganghoferstrasse.

Summer 1933: Edith, Margot, and Anne Frank go to stay with Grandmother Holländer in Aachen. Otto Frank looks for their home in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

September 15, 1933: Otto Frank establishes the company Opekta-Works.

October 1933: Alice Frank-Stern, Anne's grandmother, moves to Basel, Switzerland.

December 5, 1933: Edith and Margot Frank move to Amsterdam.

February 1934: Anne Frank moves to Amsterdam.

1934: Anne begins her Montessori schooling.

Summer 1937: The Van Pels family flees Osnabrück, Germany, for the Netherlands.

June 1, 1938: Otto Frank establishes his second company, Pectacon B. V.

December 8, 1938: Fritz Pfeffer flees Germany for the Netherlands.

March 1939: Grandmother Hollander moves from Aachen to live with the Frank family.

December 1, 1940: Otto Frank's company moves to number 263 on the Prinsengracht Canal in Amsterdam.

May 8, 1941: Opekta-Works changes its name to Trading Company Gies & Co.

Summer 1941: Anne and Margot attend the Jewish Lyceum in Amsterdam.

January 1942: Grandmother Holländer dies.

June 12, 1942: Anne Frank receives the diary for her thirteenth birthday.

July 5, 1942: Margot Frank receives a notice ordering her to report for deportation to the Westerbork camp.

July 6, 1942: The Frank family goes into hiding in the Secret Annex at number 263 Prinsengracht.

July 13, 1942: The Van Pels family (Van Daan in the diary)join the Frank family in the Secret Annex.

November 16, 1942: Fritz Pfeffer (Albert Dussel in the diary) moves into the Secret Annex.

August 4, 1944: The families hiding in the Secret Annex are discovered.

August 8, 1944: The people from the Secret Annex are transported to the concentration camp at Westerbork.

September 3, 1944: The prisoners are sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz in Poland.

September 6, 1944: They arrive in Auschwitz. Hermann van Pels dies here a few weeks later.

October 1944: Anne and Margot are taken to the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen.

December 20, 1944: Fritz Pfeffer dies in Neuengamme.

January 6, 1945: Edith Frank dies in Auschwitz.

January 27, 1945: Otto Frank is freed when Auschwitz is liberated by the Russian Army.

March 1945: Anne and Margot Frank die in Bergen-Belsen.

May 5, 1945: Peter van Pels dies in Mauthausen.

Spring 1945: Mrs. Van Pels dies in Theresienstadt.

June 3, 1945: Otto Frank returns to Amsterdam.

Summer 1947: The diary of Anne Frank is published in Dutch.

1952: Otto Frank moves to Basel, Switzerland.

November 1953: Otto Frank marries Elfriede Geiringer.

August 19,1980: Otto Frank dies in Birsfelden at the age of ninety-one.

THE HELPERS

Bep Voskuijl died on May 6, 1983. Victor Kugler moved to Toronto, Canada, in 1955; he died there on December 16, 1981. Johannes Kleiman died on January 30, 1959. Jan Gies died on January 26, 1993. Miep Gies is still living in Amsterdam.

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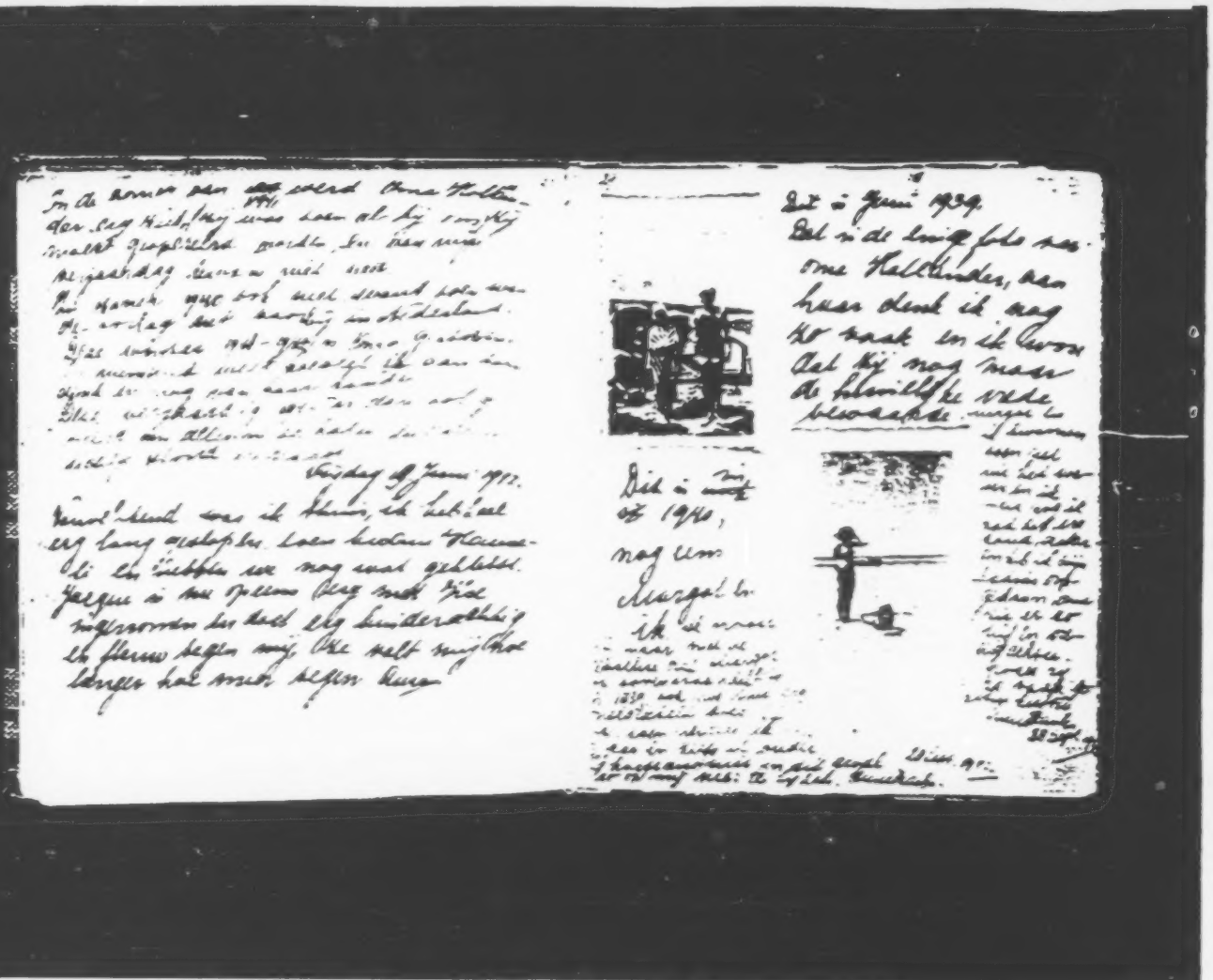

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